

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

MAY 6TH, 1942

Supplement to
C.N.-L. No. 132

OF THESE STONES

Two books that I have been reading lately suggest the possibility that greater changes may be brought about in the industrial system by what is taking place within industry than by advice tendered from outside. For some time the Church has been offering guidance to industry about the path it ought to follow. We ought at least to envisage the possibility that things may be happening in industry from which the Church has something to *learn*. I have found these volumes more exciting than the findings of the Malvern Conference or the pamphlet on *Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction*—for the reason, no doubt, that what springs out of life and is integrally related to it has an actuality and force that leak away from the enunciation of general principles. If it is true, as John the Baptist declared, that “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” we may not exclude the possibility that new, life-giving ideas may break into our society even from the seemingly soulless domain of the factory and machine.

VITAL THINKING IN INDUSTRY

One of the books is a series of papers delivered by the late Mary Parker Follett to various conferences in America and this country concerned with problems of business management between the years 1925 and 1932. It is called *Dynamic Administration*,¹ and is published by the Management Publications Trust under the auspices of the Confederation of Management Associations. The source of publication both enhances its significance and increases the risk that it may fail to receive from the general public the attention it deserves.

Miss Follett established her reputation by the publication more than twenty years ago of a remarkably fresh and stimulating book on political science, *The New State*. She showed herself to be an original thinker, conversant with what was going on in the fields of philosophy, sociology, economics, biology

and other sciences. She chose to concentrate her main energies in her later years on the study of the problems of business management for the reason that “it is among business men (not all, but a few) that I find the greatest vitality of thinking to-day, and I like to do my thinking where it is most alive.”

Miss Follett's life was devoted to the search for principles which would provide a foundation for human well-being and progress, and which, applied to the ordering of industry, or a city, or a state, or international life, would make it possible for every man to fulfil his divinely intended vocation to develop his full capacity. What thrilled her was to discover that in the sphere of business management principles were beginning to emerge that had a relevance for the whole of human life. Business was pioneering in the organized relations of human beings, and was thereby contributing to the solution of the problems of government and of international relations. Business men were breaking fresh ground in the great task of substituting *thinking* for fighting.

THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRATION

One of the key principles of life Miss Follett found in the idea of integration.

She takes as her starting-point the fact of conflict. The existence of differences, which may lead to disagreement and conflict, is not a bad thing, but something to be turned to account. Diversity is the stuff of life. Fear of difference is dread of life itself. Since differences are part of the structure of the world, conflict is unavoidable. Instead of condemning it, we ought to make it *do* something for us. There are three ways in which we may deal with conflict—domination, compromise and integration.

Domination means the victory of one side over the other. Only one party gets what it wants. This is the easiest way of dealing with conflict—on a short view. But the truth is that the way of domination leads

¹ Management Publications Trust. Bath. 10s. 6d. By post, 11s.

to a diminution of life. The elimination of diversity detracts from the richness of existence. An individual who imposes his will on those around him creates a solitary world, in which no will exists but his own and the joy of communication between persons has disappeared. The fundamental law of the universe is the increase of life, and unless we obey that law the universe breaks around us and is shattered.

Compromise results in neither party getting what it wants. Each gives up a little for the sake of peace; that is to say, in order that the activity which the conflict interrupted may go on. Compromise does not create anything new; it deals only with what already exists.

Integration is the achievement of a new whole which transcends the previously existing standpoints. It is the discovery of a way by which all parties are able to obtain what they want—not necessarily what they think that they want, but what they discover in the process of achieving integration that they really want. The first step towards integration is to bring all differences into the open. All cards must be laid on the table. When the conflict is uncovered and the differences are discussed in common, a process of revaluation begins to take place. Brought up against other desires, the real desires of each side are found to be somewhat different from what they were originally thought to be. Through this revaluation it may be discovered that the interests of all parties can be made to fit, so that all can find a place in the final solution.

Since integration creates something new, it is the means of progress. It is never final, because we live in a dynamic, not a static, world. Every integration opens up new differences which need to be integrated. We thus move forward to an ever-growing fulness and richness of life. Because integration is a creative achievement, it can come about only by hard thinking, ingenuity and invention.

This is not to claim that every problem can be solved by integration. Miss Follett may be inclined, perhaps, in her enthusiasm to push her principle too far. But she explicitly recognizes that there are conflicts that cannot be integrated. Every conflict takes place within a framework of existing law and practice, which the parties immediately concerned cannot change. But the fact that the principle of integration, like other principles, has limits does not detract from its importance.

One result of seeking integration will be that control by facts will come increasingly to take the place of control by persons. The deciding factor is the law of the situation. This does not mean a supposed iron law of technical necessity, determined by experts, to which human beings have just to submit, but the precise opposite. It means the truth of the situation as it comes to be understood after everyone concerned has contributed his point of view. Instead of one person giving orders to another, both take their orders from a common understanding of the situation. This depersonalizing of the source of orders does not eliminate the personal element, but rather enhances it. For the facts which all must obey are facts established in common discussion, to which each has contributed the fulness of his personal experience. Integration does not mean consent or acquiescence, but *participation*; and participation means everyone taking a full and active part according to his capacity. To bring about real participation is a high, difficult, creative undertaking.

The principle of integration opens the door to a new era of collective creativeness, in which men unite their capacities in the pursuit of common purposes, each giving of his best and seeking to elicit the best from others. The appeal which life makes to each of us to-day, Miss Follett says, is to the socially constructive passion in every man.

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL LIVING

The other volume, published two years before the war, is called *Leadership in a Free Society*,¹ and is by T. N. Whitehead, assistant professor in the Harvard School of Business Administration and formerly scientific officer to the British Admiralty. No small part of its value is that it is to a large extent a record and examination of scientific investigations undertaken in recent years by business firms.

Its central thesis is that the coming of the machine has resulted in a new type of progressive society and that it has still to be proved that under modern conditions social living can retain the stability needed for human satisfaction. The craving for social relationship is extremely deep in human nature, and the improvement of social living is the major problem for those who wish to avert a collapse of modern industrial civilization. By social living is meant the fulfilment of the innate desire of human beings to enter

as persons into communication with other persons, to join with them in common, worthwhile activities and to make their own significant contribution to the shared activity.

The rise of industrialism has had the effect of diminishing the social importance of other forms of human association. These other types of association need to be cultivated and strengthened, but a society can retain its vitality only if its *principal* organizations conceive their responsibilities in social terms. It is especially to industry and business, therefore, that we must look for initiative in developing genuine forms of social living.

The object of leadership, Professor Whitehead insists, in any society, industrial or other, is to achieve satisfying social living for everyone. As part of this task the leaders have, of course, to organize economic activities. But economic activities are not an end in themselves, "and leaders who neglect the end for the means cannot achieve a stable society."

The experiments described in Professor Whitehead's volume bring out very clearly the extent to which economic effectiveness is dependent on the presence or absence of the satisfactions resulting from social living. It is easy for the cynical to disparage these experiments as prompted solely by the desire of business undertakings to obtain the maximum efficiency from their workers. This motive could hardly be absent, since efficiency is something at which production must aim. There is a technical element in life, and complete submission to its requirements in its own sphere is both a religious act of obedience to God, the Creator of the world, and also the way in which, in this field, we can best promote the welfare of our fellow-men.

But when we have widened our view of industry to take in not only its technical requirements but the requirements of human, social living, we have moved into a *totally different world*. That is the point of these volumes, and its significance cannot be exaggerated. They are groping their way towards a revolutionary and epoch-making change, in which industry comes to be thought of as existing for men and not men for industry.

TO DIMINISH MISUNDERSTANDINGS

It is impossible to open up such far-reaching issues in narrow limits of space without the risk of being misunderstood. In particular, three explanations are needed to put what has been said in the right perspective.

First, I am not suggesting that the ideas and the tentative experiments described in these volumes provide a solution of the industrial problem. It would be naive to suppose that they do away with the conflicts of real interests between classes, or that they settle at once all questions of the distribution of power. The ideas have penetrated as yet into only limited circles. A friend, who has an unusually wide knowledge of the business world, tells me that, while he does not for a moment think that the majority of people in the industrial world have an inkling of what Miss Follett is talking about, he is convinced from his own knowledge of what is going on in industry that she is right in thinking that something is moving which may have great significance for the future. The yeast has begun to work.

The questions raised in these books are not academic questions. They are questions on the answer to which the fate of this country and of mankind may hinge. Neither Fascism nor Communism could be established in this country without violence, which would lead inevitably to a dictatorship; and it is an illusion to suppose that a dictatorship can be got rid of once it has obtained complete control of the modern technical means of influencing public opinion and suppressing resistance. It has yet to be proved that in the conditions of to-day there is a real, effective alternative to the totalitarian state. It may be that in these volumes is the germ of a philosophy—a philosophy, be it noted, of life, and not merely of business management—that, believed in and acted on, would make possible a society that was both planned and free, and enable this country "to save itself by its exertions and the world by its example."

Secondly, I do not forget that it is possible to take a more pessimistic and tragic view of the present predicament of our society than is suggested by these volumes; though it will have been noted that it is the question of the stability of our modern technological civilization that is Professor Whitehead's chief concern. What I have in mind is the view which finds expression, for example, in the papers of Mr. Middleton Murry and Mr. D. M. Mackinnon at the Malvern Conference,¹ and is shared by many younger theologians. The full force of Mr. Murry's contention that modern mass society, created by the machine, is impervious to our simplest human purpose, and that, consequently, any attempt to apply Christian principles to the

¹ *Malvern, 1941.* Longmans. 10s. 6d.

existing social order is simply productive of illusion, needs to be understood if we are not to lull ourselves to sleep with a false optimism. But the solution to which Mr. Murry seems to incline, namely, that the only thing for Christians to do is to form small communities, living an autonomous life on the fringes of society in close relation to nature, and to seek in these small groups to recover the lost clue to human living, is one that can be acted on only by a tiny minority. The vast majority have no choice but to remain in industry and make the best of it that they can. It is a fact of real importance that those who are actually engaged in industry and dealing with its problems are more hopeful that something can be done about them than some of those who view it more or less from outside.

Thirdly, the thought of these volumes moves in the secular and human, not in the religious and theological, sphere. There is nothing specifically Christian about the philosophy of integration. A society based on these principles might emerge, for example, in China rather than in the West. We must not, indeed, press the distinction too far, since God is present and at work in the whole of human life. I am confident also that it would be found on examination that many of those taking the most active part in furthering the new tendencies are either Christians themselves or have owed much, directly or indirectly, to Christian influences.

It remains true, however, that we are not here on specifically Christian ground. The central Christian problem of sin and redemption does not come within the scope of the discussions. And on a total view that omission is of great importance, the missing factor may be vital to the whole business. It is precisely when we pass from technical planning to human relations that we come up against the problem of unredeemed human nature, in ourselves and in others. We may discover that in order to integrate we need

first to be integrated ourselves, and that that integration can only come about when our lives cease to be self-centred and find their true centre in God.

But the fact that issues of the highest moment lie outside the scope of these volumes must not be allowed to obscure the immense importance for Christians of the questions which they do discuss. What they are concerned with is the question of a true *natural* order; the question whether it is, or is not, possible to create conditions in modern industry in which men can live as *men*—that is as persons in genuine communication and co-operation with other persons. If that question is answered in the negative, Christianity can have no meaning for the actual lives of the vast majority of men to-day. Mr. Murry tells us that he can imagine a society which, even though it would not be a Christian society, would be one in which it would be at least *possible* to live as a Christian, in a sense in which it is not possible, in his view, for most people in society as it is to-day.

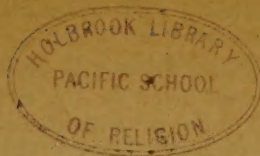
The question whether a genuinely human life is possible in a society dominated by the machine is the concern of every citizen, and in seeking an answer to it Christians have to co-operate with those who are not Christians. For Christians the vital difference is whether the endeavour to create conditions of true social living is the expression of men's confidence in their own power and wisdom to shape the world as they desire, or a reverent act of homage and obedience to God, who made men to have communion with one another and to live in the world as His sons. If it is the former, it will meet in the end with frustration, since it involves a denial of man's true nature as a dependent being and ignores the reality of his divided mind. If it is the latter, we dare not set any limits to the changes that may come about when men whole-heartedly set themselves to carry out the will of God.

J. H. O.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.

MAY 20TH, 1942

Supplement to
C.N.-L. No. 134



THE FREE CHURCHES AND WORKING CLASS CULTURE

By John Marsh

The Supplement on "Ecumenical Christianity and the Working Classes" has rightly evoked widespread interest. Its importance has been recognized not least in the significant fact that one of Mr. Symons' central assertions has never been questioned: "We have in Great Britain what is perhaps unique in Christian history—a religious tradition which is native and indigenous to an *industrial* proletariat." If that statement be true its importance can hardly be over-emphasized, for it suggests that the Church has opportunities in Great Britain that it has nowhere else: the Free Churches, which are chiefly concerned, have therefore critical responsibilities. It is true that "this situation is rapidly changing. Everywhere the Churches are losing the initiative in working class life." Nevertheless, opportunity is not wholly past, for "while the Churches may have lost the initiative . . . their potential power is still great. The channels are still there, but the current is slackening." How can the stream be made to flow again, until it runs full tide? That is the question posed for Free Church thought and action. The Christian News-Letter has invited comment from certain Free Churchmen in various parts of the country, and this further consideration of the relationships of the Free Churches and working class culture is largely based upon their replies, though the writer is not thereby absolved from his responsibility for the judgments and opinions hereafter expressed.

The issues we propose to consider are these. First, how far and in what way the Free Churches have lost touch with working class culture. Second, the causes that have contributed to this, whether within the Churches, or in workers' institutions, or whether the causes are themselves symptoms of a more fundamental social malaise. Third, the possible ways in which the Free Churches may

expect to regain their contacts with working class life, and the principles upon which any experiments should be conducted. Finally, to what extent the great ecumenical movement has made living contact with the working classes, and how such a movement might be presented to them.

FREE CHURCHES AND WORKERS

There is a certain tendency to accept too readily the judgment that the Free Churches have lost touch with the working classes. Several correspondents stress this, and one writes that "the Church—as a Communist told me this week—has much more power than appears on the surface."¹ Working class conventions are still strong, and "reach back to a life in which the Church was a vital power." Thus many parents who never attend Church send their children to Sunday school and church clubs, knowing that "they are in good hands there." Men's meetings, P.S.A.'s, and Firesides still attract working men in places, while the Churches have still extensive contacts with women through mothers' meetings, sisterhoods, etc. In districts where employers live at some distance from their workpeople and consequently do not attend the same Church, congregations have not suffered the same decline as is generally experienced. Further, the Churches are bringing home to the workers their concern to apply Christian principles to the industrial situation. Copec, the Oxford Conference, and the literature arising therefrom has so far chiefly affected the ministry, but the results of this side of ecumenism are being increasingly used by study groups, discussion classes, and various forms of adult education. These are not negligible assets, and the Church may still rejoice that she counts influential workers among her members.

¹ Further quotations are from letters received, save where otherwise stated.

FREE CHURCHES AND WORKERS' INSTITUTIONS

Yet any mere enumeration of church members misses the basic point of Mr. Symons' Supplement. We must distinguish between the number of church members that are working class, and the contact that the Church has with the institutions of working class culture as such. In this latter sphere the position has deteriorated most tragically. Where can we now find those closely knit manufacturing and mining villages of which Mr. Symons writes, "where working folk built up their own institutions—chapel, trade unions, co-operative stores; the same people were leaders in each, and practical social experience, ethical standards and moral drive passed readily from one to the other"? This has well-nigh disappeared. Trade union and Co-operative leadership has largely passed out of the hands of church members, and has often passed into the hands of those antagonistic to the Christian Church. The problem for nonconformity is, therefore, not simply how to increase its membership among the workers, but how to regain an organic relationship with the institutions of working-class culture.

DECLINE AND ITS CAUSES IN THE CHURCH

The causes of this decline are to be found, in part, within the Church. The formative days of which Mr. Symons wrote knew a nonconformity predominantly, if not wholly, liberal in politics. The appearance within the nonconformist Churches of political Labour was accompanied by a growth of political prejudice within a religious community. Parallel to the development of the master-man relationship in society there was a like development inside the Church. In the formative period many employers had themselves begun their careers as workers, and their whole life, even as masters, was lived in the same community as their employees. But the mere advance of time, and the natural concern for profits, produced a radical change. The master's children now went to a different school, and his whole manner of life underwent social transformation. His industrial success combined with his new social status caused him to be raised to office in the Church, where his financial power made it appear that the Churches were on the other side from the worker, and controlled by regard for the capitalist *status quo*. To such masters labour

was suspect, and against such plutocracy the workers protested in vain, until finally they went out of the Church on a wave of disillusionment, as at the founding of the I.L.P. This breach, and the misunderstandings that produced it, were largely responsible for the new and restricted policy of the Church. She now began to force her members to choose between working for and in the Church, and working for some secular institution. Where she once had recognized the profoundly Christian character of certain secular activities, she now pronounced an emphatic "either—or." "It was as though one had to go outside to serve humanity, leaving a more pietistic type of Christian inside." Or, to use Mr. Symons' words, "those who see their vocation to lie in secular activity are apt to be viewed as backsliders by the elect, even if they keep up church attendance." These facts tended to produce two convictions among the industrial proletariat: first, that church-going was a class activity, for the employer and the clerk; second, that the Church was not concerned with, or able to do anything about, social injustice, but was, in fact, an irrelevant luxury. But community had been destroyed not only between Church and cultural institution, but also within the Church itself. The decay of the sacramental life of the Free Churches, and the waning of the church meeting, testify to their unquestioning acceptance of the "escapist" individualism of the time. "Chapel became now the place to hear a stimulating sermon." Moreover, worship seemed far from the realities of the worker's life, and the gospel of Love remote from the fierce struggle for existence. Even where Churches and ministers were most sympathetic, they were powerless to change the system. Suspicion grew; alienation followed.

DECLINE AND ITS CAUSES IN CULTURE

But there are contributory causes within working-class institutions themselves. There has been a general drift from the clear Christian principles upon which many were founded. The change of personnel partly accounts for this, but this in turn points to the definitely materialistic political outlook which has infiltrated into labour institutions of all kinds. Then new forms of working-class life appeared, apart from, and sometimes in rivalry with, the Church. Working men's clubs provide recreation in more comfort and

luxury than most Churches can afford, and with less exacting standards of conduct. Sports and social facilities at factories offer an even more complete social life to the worker, and witness as much to his need of proper community relationships as to the benevolent wisdom of the management. The dominance of the profit motive has also encouraged the worker to think of his life as centrally concerned with economic advantage. But this decline is "shared by other organizations. Adult schools, W.E.A. classes, trade union meetings, Labour Party meetings all share in it. . . . Several factors have contributed: first, the breakdown of narrow community life consequent upon the development of easy transport and amusement. Second, the stage has been reached in some organizations where to a large degree the pioneer work is ended; the machinery works efficiently and the growing tendency is to leave everything to the paid official." The decline is probably not so serious as in the Church, because there is clear economic advantage, e.g. in membership of a trade union, but decline and to some extent apathy are there. For there is a growing sense that while union and party can bargain effectively within the present system, they are no more able than the Church to change the system itself. So the decline of the Church and the apathy of the worker can to some extent be seen as symptoms of a common disorder. The irrelevance of the Church and the final impotence of party and union alike testify to the worker that the system is too much for him: he must make the best of things as they are. The springs of action are dried up at their source, and he thus avoids the challenge of religion, moral and spiritual, and declines the adventure of political reconstruction. So there has grown up a large section of the industrial population outside of effective contact with party or Church, waiting for a lead to definite Christian action. They will now respond only to a real call to act.

THE ROOT CAUSES

The root cause of this disorder is deep-seated. It is not indeed unconnected with the sense that many workers have that the Church is a mere buttress of capitalism. But that can never be an ultimate truth for Churches that were "native and indigenous to an industrial proletariat." What then has happened? We hazard the judgment that the root cause has been the disappearance of

the community life proper to society by reason of the Church's indiscriminating acceptance of certain distinctions in a form alien to her Gospel.

First, that of master and man. This was transferred almost unchanged into the structure of the Church. Office in the Church was given to the "educated" employer and clerks. Workers were appointed, if at all, because they were "getting on." Secular schooling was mistaken for spiritual wisdom, and the failure to exercise religious judgment in the appointment of officers cut the unity of church life clean in two, and effectively prevented the Church from healing the same wound in secular society.

Second, that of sacred and secular. Political dispute had entered the Church, and she tried to buy an uneasy peace by a new interpretation of the relationships of sacred and secular. Thus to enter politics, or take office in a trade union, was identified with abandoning the Church, essentially, if not actually. So she herself helped to produce the situation where Church leaders and political leaders were different persons. The early community, where ethical standards and moral drive passed freely between Church and cultural institution, was broken.

Third, that of obedience and authority. Whatever may have been the crudities of church meetings, class meetings or other church courts in the early industrial Free Churches, they were true democracies in which the whole Church, minister and deacons and members, recognized its duty to obey a law outside of them all—the Word of God. But with the growth of a "class" diaconate and the spread of a middle-class ministry, authority now appears within the body, so that the minister may now exercise a popery worse than his fathers rejected, or deacons an oligarchy well-nigh "totalitarian." Once more, the true pattern of divine community is spoiled.

Fourth, that of individual and social. The Free Churches once balanced their personal evangelism with a healthy public sacramentalism, and a vigorous community fellowship and discipline. Men found themselves as individuals, and were born to new social relationships as they responded to the preaching and the life of the Church. But now the tragic individualism of the times has gained more than a foothold in the Church, and church members can perform their inde-feasible private devotions before the public ceremony of the Church without any counter-

balance in its contemporary life. The Church is no longer a body, an organism; it is a molecular structure, in which numerous particles pursue their several orbits in strict rotatory pattern, but never meet. The Church as the school of community is gone.

EXPERIMENTS

It would seem as if effective experiment could proceed along two paths. First, that of re-building the proper community of the Church, and second, that of sharing in the establishment of community in the secular sphere. With regard to its own community, it is necessary to train the Churches anew in the great communal acts of Christian worship with preaching and sacrament on the one hand, and church meeting with its fellowship and discipline on the other. In their responsibility towards the secular the Free Churches face a critical choice. Either they must reassert their rejection of clericalism and train their own army of lay workers for the industrial, political and cultural fields, welding them into a lay movement with its own status and authority: or they must revert to clericalism—the tendency of recent years—and in fact, if not in theory, resign the secular to the secularists. “If youths who are now members of our clubs can receive there a thorough training not only in Christian ethics and theology, but also in Christian sociology, and if their ministers can guide them into politics, trade unions, co-operatives and other activities, then the Church might re-establish its influence on our national life.” This will not be done simply by training “lay evangelists” in the narrower sense, though among those who are in neither party nor Church there is great scope for new lay evangelism. The desired lay movement will provide personnel for the membership and the leadership of *secular* institutions among the working classes. We must cease from judging a church member, good or bad, by the number of evenings he spends on church premises doing church work, and instead come to estimate his worth in terms of the Christian impact he is making in secular society. Thus

it is not because church organizations have suffered a temporary eclipse that we suggest the tactical manoeuvre of decreasing their number; but out of considered principle we ask that their whole function and status in Church and in society be radically reconsidered. There are times, of course, when the minister or the church court must speak openly about social disorder or injustice; but these are not the main weapons for the Church in her warfare in the world. The war cannot be conducted solely by long-range guns, for these are useless at point-blank range. The Church must have her army to fight at close quarters, and have it well trained and conscious of its purpose.

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Finally, we raise the question of the great ecumenical movement. Communism knows how easy, and yet how hard, it is to stir the workers to a world vision. Russia, rejecting Trotskyism, has become a nationalized socialist state; yet we still hear that the workers of the world must unite. The conception of “one holy Church throughout all the world” has superficially like propaganda value, though the Church cannot speak as if Christendom were not divided, or as if unity were some purely human and temporal goal. But it is greatly to be doubted whether the worker will come to see the point of the ecumenical movement unless he can be persuaded of its “relevance” to his own life. Only if he is discovering that relevance as a layman accepting his Christian responsibilities in and for the secular order is he likely to be impressed with the relevance of a world-wide Church. So the primary duty, even of the ecumenists in Britain, would seem to lie in the healing of the breaches between the Free Churches and working-class culture. Otherwise, to close with Mr. Symons’ words, they “must be content to waste that tradition, and build an academic structure of religious ideas, as far as England goes, largely in mid-air, and hope that it may, some day, touch ground.”

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.



THE GROWTH OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE CHURCHES

The two bodies which were set up in 1938 to serve the Churches in this country in matters of common concern have unanimously agreed to amalgamate and form a single body to be known as the British Council of Churches. The plan is now being submitted to the Churches, but since it is a simplification of arrangements that they have already approved, it is not likely that their sanction will be withheld.

This seems an appropriate occasion for a brief review of the movement towards closer co-operation between the Churches in both the national and the international spheres. Its active growth coincides with the period of my adult life, and it has been my lot to have had some sort of connection, closer or looser, with most of its important phases.

THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

When I was an undergraduate in Oxford, a friend burst into my room one day in the year 1894 and asked me whether I was doing anything in the afternoon, and if not, whether I would help him to show some of the sights of Oxford to a visitor, who had come over with an introduction to him from America. It was my first introduction to John R. Mott, and the beginning of a life-long intimate friendship with him. The occasion was his first visit to this country. In the next year he returned to Europe and founded the World Student Christian Federation. His extensive travels in the years which followed led to the formation of national student Christian movements in many countries.

Few will question that one of the principal factors in bringing about mutual understanding and increasing co-operation between the Churches during the present century has been the Student Christian Movement. At student conferences leaders of the Churches met and came to know one another in a way they had not done before. Misunderstandings and suspicions were dissipated. Friendships were formed. Those brought up in one tradition

or school of thought discovered how much they could learn from those whose background was entirely different.

No one in our time has exerted an influence comparable to that of Dr. Mott, who a short time ago retired from the chairmanship of the International Missionary Council, in drawing together Christians all over the world. To those who have not known him a brief description may not be out of place. Possessed of an untiring energy, he would, for months on end, fill up day after day with meetings and interviews, literally without a pause, from eight in the morning till eleven at night, bringing to each a complete concentration of his powers. He had hosts of friends in almost every country and an unfailing memory not only for faces but for the personal problems of individuals when he met them again after the lapse of years. He was an unrivalled chairman of conferences and committees, combining a courteous attention to every point of view with a firmness of character which led to the almost invariable acceptance of his rulings without question. He enjoyed the friendship and esteem of leading statesmen in many nations and had always a ready ear for the youngest student or the humblest missionary. He united unusual gifts of leadership with a remarkable simplicity and humility that sprang from a self-forgetting devotion to a cause. Few lives have been more completely controlled by a single-minded loyalty; from the days when as a student of law he decided to give his life to the service of Christ he has had but one undeviating aim. Few have had an equal capacity to help the most different kinds of people to see that Christ is the key to life.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

In 1910 the World Missionary Conference assembled in Edinburgh, under the chairmanship of Dr. Mott. It was attended by missionaries from all parts of the world, repre-

sentatives of the younger Churches in Japan, China, India and other fields, and by leaders of the home Churches. It was the most widely representative gathering of Christians that had been held up to that time.

The Conference inaugurated a new era in co-operation by appointing a Continuation Committee to carry forward its work and by providing it with a budget and secretariat. Up to that time conferences had met, passed resolutions and dispersed. Their members returned to their individual tasks and responsibilities, and it was nobody's concern to see that *effect was given to the resolutions*. Similar conferences would assemble again after a period of years and reaffirm the same resolutions, which continued to remain a dead letter. The Edinburgh Conference was the first interdenominational gathering to make provision for following up its conclusions and for initiating and carrying out further policy. None of those who took part in the decision of the conference to perpetuate its work could have foreseen the developments in co-operation between the Churches to which this precedent would lead. It may be noted also that this step in the ecclesiastical sphere anticipated similar action in the political field, when eight years later the League of Nations was established with a budget and secretariat.

Dr. Mott was appointed chairman of the Continuation Committee, and I was made its secretary. The Continuation Committee took steps shortly after the last war to bring into existence the International Missionary Council, which has exerted a growing influence on the life of the world-wide Church. The consequent formation of the Conference of Missionary Societies initiated a new era in co-operation between the missionary societies in this country.

FAITH AND ORDER

Among those who took part in the conference at Edinburgh was Bishop Brent of the Philippines, a man of unusual charm, deep spirituality, wide experience of public affairs and far-reaching vision, which he had the power of communicating to others. The World Missionary Conference had been called to consider co-operation in the practical tasks of the Churches overseas, and there was an express understanding that questions of doctrine and Church polity, on which those participating in the conference differed among themselves, would not come within

its purview. Bishop Brent maintained that, wise and necessary as this limitation was, it was essential that a means should be found of frankly facing these differences which kept the Christian bodies apart, and of examining them with a view to the removal of obstacles in the way of reunion of the Churches. On his return to America he took immediate steps to set up machinery to prepare for a World Conference on Faith and Order. The Conference met at Lausanne in 1927, and appointed a Continuation Committee to carry forward its work. There was thus formed a permanent organ for dealing with one of the fundamental problems of the Church, namely, the causes, and the means of removal, of the divisions within it.

LIFE AND WORK

The next initiative came from Archbishop Söderblom of Upsala, a man of brilliant mind, universal sympathies and boundless energy. After the conclusion of the last war he drew attention to the fact that the Churches now had international organizations to further co-operation in their missionary tasks overseas and to confer together about questions of doctrine and polity, but that there was as yet no provision to promote co-operation between them in the practical tasks of the home field and in dealing with the common problems which confronted them in all countries after the war. This led to the calling of an international conference of the Churches at Stockholm in 1925. Before separating the conference set up the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, with a budget and secretariat and headquarters at Geneva. This was an act of great significance in view of the common dangers to which the Churches, on the Continent of Europe in particular, were to be exposed in the years ahead.

TOWARDS A WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The existence of active secretariats enabled all three international Christian organizations to develop many activities during the next ten-year period. Many international meetings of councils, committees and smaller groups were held, which enabled leaders of the Churches to take counsel together and face their common tasks. Great advances were made in mutual understanding. A new sense of the Church as a world-wide society was awakened in extending circles.

In 1937 a successor to the conference at Stockholm met at Oxford at the invitation of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. Its subject was the relations of Church, Community and State. In the same year the second world Conference on Faith and Order met at Edinburgh. A third world Conference was brought together by the International Missionary Council in 1938 at Madras, at which the younger Churches in Asia and Africa were strongly represented, and in the following year an international Conference of Christian Youth was held at Amsterdam.

The conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh gave general approval to the formation of a World Council of Churches, in which the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements would be merged. The war has prevented the consummation of these plans, but a Provisional Committee of the World Council has been formed, with its headquarters at Geneva and with Dr. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. William Paton as its principal secretaries. In view of the national and racial animosities occasioned by the war, the existence of such a body is a fact of great potential importance. In spite of the war, over seventy Churches have declared their adhesion to the World Council, and through its three offices in Geneva, London and New York it has been able to maintain a real, though in many cases slender, contact between the Churches in different countries. On the continent of Europe especially, many who were inclined to look on the international Christian movement as an excrescence and luxury have come to realize that the universality of the Christian fellowship belongs to the essence of the Church.

CO-OPERATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

The conference at Oxford opened up the problems of the relation of the Church to the modern state and the modern community, which subsequent events—and in particular the war—have brought home to the consciousness of everyone. The discussion of these issues made it evident that two tasks needed to be taken in hand in Great Britain.

The first was to provide more adequately for co-operation between the Churches in their practical tasks. There already existed bodies for this purpose which had done good work, but they were limited in their resources and in the range of their support. It was necessary to establish a more effective organ of co-

operation and to equip it with a whole-time staff.

The second, more difficult, task which demanded new measures was to relate the life and work of the Church more closely to the activities of the common life. New bridges needed to be built between institutional Christianity and the social and educational forces which were shaping the life of the community. If this task was to be accomplished the Churches needed to call into counsel those who were actively and responsibly engaged in the conduct of public life. This meant more than an attempt to persuade an increasing number of lay men and women to share in the organized life and activities of the Churches. It meant rather a new effort in planned consultation between the leaders of the Churches and those responsible for the conduct of the various spheres of the common life. The importance and urgency of the task to which these sentences point have, so far as my knowledge goes, been more fully apprehended in Great Britain than elsewhere; at any rate, in no other country has recognition of the need led as yet to the setting up of machinery expressly designed to meet it.

Following on representative conferences at Lambeth Palace an approach was made to the Churches, and their approval was obtained for the formation of a Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life. The name was a little ponderous, but it was an accurate expression of one of the two main purposes for which the Council was formed. The Council was set up in 1938. It consisted of 24 members, of whom 14 were appointed officially by the Churches, and 10 were lay men and women co-opted as representatives of the various spheres of the common life. The Archbishop of Canterbury was its President and took the keenest interest in its work. It was made clear from the start that the Council could fulfil its task only if it had at its disposal the services of a strong staff of whole-time officers. A determined attempt, that is to say, was made to base the new undertaking on the realistic view that important tasks on a national scale can be effectively accomplished only if there is a human force available not wholly incommensurate with the work which needs to be done.

The war intervened. The hopes in regard to staff were not realized, though once or twice success seemed to be almost within reach. In the first weeks of the war the Christian News-Letter was launched, and this

task absorbed nearly the whole of the energies of the small staff at the service of the Council.

There was also formed in association with the Council a body with a larger membership called the Commission for International Friendship and Social Responsibility, composed of representatives of the Churches and of the interdenominational Christian agencies. The Archbishop of York became the chairman of the Commission and Dr. A. C. Craig accepted the office of Secretary. Under their energetic leadership and that of others associated with them, the Commission has developed a wide range of activities. Of outstanding importance have been the Religion and Life Weeks which have been held, or are in preparation, in many different centres, and which express a re-awakened spirit of evangelism united with a concern about social issues. The Commission's Youth Committee, which has now a whole-time officer, has done much to stimulate and strengthen work of Christian youth organizations throughout the country and to further co-operation between them and the Board of Education and the local education authorities. One of the most important of recent developments has been the drawing together of the Commission and the Sword of the Spirit movement, and the working out of a basis for practical collaboration.

The new developments in this country which followed on the Oxford Conference owed much to the vision, courage and initiative of Miss Iredale. It was in her fertile mind also that the idea of the Christian News-Letter took form.

In view of the apparent impossibility in war time of securing for the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life the staff which had originally been aimed at, it was decided a year ago that the whole

situation should be reviewed. In the course of this review unanimous agreement was reached that the right course was to unite the Council and the Commission to form a single British Council of Churches, which would at the same time be the body co-operating in Great Britain with the World Council of Churches. This plan has now taken definite shape. The British section of the World Conference on Faith and Order is also merged in the new Council.

The Council of Churches will consist of 112 members, appointed by the Churches and the interdenominational Christian organizations and, to the extent of about one-sixth, co-opted by the Council itself. The Council will work mainly through committees and departments, dealing respectively with international friendship, social responsibility, faith and order, evangelism and youth.

There has thus been built up during the present century an effective machinery in both the national and the international field to enable the Churches to consult together and to co-operate in matters in which they wish to take common action.

In the discussions during recent months relating to the formation of the British Council of Churches, it has been clearly recognized that it is desirable that the work of the Council should be supplemented by a freer body, composed in the main of lay men and women, which would concentrate attention on the tasks that lie on the frontier between organized religion and secular society. Plans are being worked out for carrying forward in this new form the attempt to build fresh bridges between the Christian faith and the common life and for the development of the activities associated with the Christian News-Letter. Further information will be given about these plans as soon as they are completed.

J. H. O.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.

JUNE 17TH, 1942



Supplement to
C.N.-L. No. 138

THE CHANGING ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY

DEAR DR. OLDHAM,

You ask me about the changes which are going on in industry to-day. These are not isolated war phenomena; they are part of the general development of industrial organization which has been taking place over the first half of the present century and which may be roughly described as a change from "liberal capitalism" to "controlled capitalism." In liberal capitalism the *entrepreneur* determined, within the fairly wide limits set by law, his lines of trade, methods of production, selling policy, prices and wages. He had in many matters very little actual freedom; prices, wages and so on were usually dependent on "market rates" and not on the conscious actions of individual firms. Yet they were not the subject of legislative or institutional control. In the last forty years this situation has changed fundamentally. There has been a great increase in legislation, government regulations and tribunals controlling industrial activity. What is quite as significant, employers' associations have increased in strength and scope, so that many industrial decisions are made not by individual firms working in competition, but by firms acting collectively. In the few years before the present war legislation began to appear which made certain decisions of trade associations legally binding upon the trade as a whole.

The war broke upon this transitional state of industry. In the main it has accelerated the existing tendencies rather than produced innovations of principle. The Government was faced with the need of directing industry to war production. Never for an instant was it thought that this could be achieved by the natural operation of supply and demand; the break with *laissez-faire* was complete. Private enterprise and the "profit motive" might (or might not) be adequate for peacetime; it was recognized that they were not sure and rapid enough for war-time. As a result, nearly every side of industrial activity was "controlled." To-day the managerial staff of even a small industrial undertaking is faced with innumerable official forms,

licences and permits to be obtained, letters and phone calls to government departments and trade associations, and interviews with inspectors and controllers.

All this is very different from the capitalism of a century ago, but it is still capitalism. The controls are of the *framework* and not of the *core* of industrial production; they may determine the conditions under which production is carried on, but the day-to-day organization of production, in the factory or other industrial unit, is still in the hands of managers appointed by, and solely responsible to, private firms. The existence of large Crown factories and controlled establishments does not alter this situation greatly, for the bulk of production is still carried on in the small and medium-sized units. Along with this increase of control has gone a steady increase in the powers and responsibilities of trade unions. They have obtained the right to sit on many of the controlling committees, and are now fighting for an increased power in the local management of factories by works' councils and production committees.

IMMEDIATE DIFFICULTIES

There have been many incidental difficulties in this form of industrial organization. Much of our industry is carried on by small independent units, impatient of outside control and with no tradition of "keeping in touch with H.Q." To co-ordinate these units, at a time when communications and office staffs alike were strained by military and civil defence requirements, has been very difficult. There have been clamorous but often contradictory criticisms from many quarters—from small firms which equate (probably quite honestly) their own well-being with that of the nation; from managers who dislike filling in forms; from proprietors for whom all restrictions are irksome; and from folk of ability who see wasted effort and wish to remedy it.

The Civil Service has come in for both deserved and undeserved criticism. For 150 years industry has strenuously resisted interference by government departments; so,

quite naturally, the permanent officials have often lacked the industrial knowledge needed to fulfil their new responsibilities. The traditional rôle of Government has been impartial application of rules to individual cases, and not the most efficient use of resources—in a phrase “administration” rather than “management.”

An even more serious risk has been that of drying up the initiative of the local business man in this extreme form of regulated capitalism. It is, of course, hard to generalize. Many managers have shown great initiative and conscientiousness in working within the scope of the controls. But it is easy for the old type of craftsman-proprietor to become completely befogged amid the maze of instructions and to lose all initiative from sheer bewilderment.

THE ALLOCATION OF POWER

These difficulties are, however, largely transitional. They are fairly obvious and capable of direct remedy. There is, however, a far more fundamental risk in our present industrial set-up. The control of an industry has been placed in the hands of existing producers in that industry, usually through the machinery of the employers' association. This has been due to several causes—to the laudable desire to spread responsibility rather than have a rigid centralized control; to the need for quick improvisation; and, in some measure, to the pressure of business interests. The result has been to place largely irresponsible, and often monopolistic, powers into the hands of persons and organizations who are closely associated with the interests of the trade concerned. An article entitled “The Controllers” in the *Economist* of March 28th, 1942, gives some indication of this risk. Trade union participation in the controls may provide some slight check, but they, no less than the employers, represent those *within* the trade concerned, and are likely to consider the interests of the trade rather than those of society as a whole.

Most of the dangers of this form of “industrial self-government” are very much tempered by war-time conditions. The sentiment of patriotism and the excess profits tax both reduce the risk of any deliberate exploitation of monopoly powers. The great majority of business managers and the temporary public officials recruited from industry are doing their best to operate the controls as fairly and as efficiently as possible. There are, admittedly, some dangers in the situation even in war-time (as the article in the *Economist* suggests), but the real danger lies in the future.

ORGANIZATION AFTER THE WAR

This brings us to the crux of the problem. We have a system of industry which is working fairly well, in spite of occasional friction, under war-time conditions; but what will happen when the war is over? It will be out of the question to retrace our steps to 1938, and yet the new features of our war-time controls will yield very different fruits in a non-war setting from those which they do at present; it is these unforeseen and unintended consequences which will determine, in a large measure, the character of the post-war world. “This war,” Mr. Bevin has said, “has forced many of us to come together to find a way out, to find the right way to solve our problems, and we must be careful of the reaction—the let-up as it were—when the fighting ceases.”

The “problem of the let-up” is a large and complex one. There are three fairly clear issues which arise:—

(1) The present state of industry has been described as “capitalism in suspense.” There is a truce in the struggle between employers and workers. How far the struggle for power and economic advantage will be renewed after the war it is difficult to say. The parties are even now manoeuvring for position; and many remember what happened after the last war.

(2) The tendency of existing controls is clearly in the direction of a “corporate” organization of industry—i.e. a form in which competition is largely eliminated and in which conditions, products and prices within each trade are controlled by the producers in that trade, usually organized through employers' associations and trade unions.

Clearly many folk within industry favour re-organization in this direction—as can be seen, for example, from the recent report published by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce. (There is recognition in this report of the dangers of monopoly and the power of organized producers, but no hint of how to counter this risk.) Many religious writers and Christian organizations seem to accept such a corporate organization not only as probable, but as desirable. Yet Christians of all people (if they are clear about sin) should be conscious of the danger of unqualified social power and suspicious of forms of organization such as this which would put such power into the hands of a sectional group.

(3) The aim of the Government in relation to industry is at present fairly simple. It is that of working out priorities among the multiple but simply related needs of war.

The situation in peace-time is wholly different, with an industrial machine capable of producing considerably more than bare necessities. There is a strong risk that, in the natural reaction against "control" at the cessation of hostilities, the Government will be driven to ill-considered fluctuations in the scope of control for the purposes of the moment. In particular, if unemployment should emerge on a large scale, there will be political pressure for controls which will merely be concerned with "making employment." Yet clearly controlling industry on the grounds of making employment rather than meeting needs involves essentially an inverted aim.

WORKERS AND CONSUMERS

There are two sets of problems arising here. One is the status and powers of the worker within a trade or occupation. This is the central concern of the trade unions, and remains a matter of the utmost importance. It is certainly not solved, and will emerge as a matter of controversy, perhaps of conflict, when the war is over. The problem has, however, been in the public eye and on the consciences of Christians for a long time; its general outline is familiar to all.

The second group of problems is concerned with the relation of each industry to the community as a whole, who are using, directly or indirectly, the products of that industry. As Dr. Temple has said (Christian News-Letter Supplement No. 41) "the consumer is the factor of primary importance, whose interest ought to be decisive for his is the only truly human interest in the whole process." This is in many ways the more fundamental matter; yet it has been widely ignored in organizational terms.

Our basic aim must be that the whole productive machine shall remain flexible and responsive to the needs of those who use its output—in other words, to us all. During the days of relatively small-scale capitalism this was ensured, in a somewhat wasteful manner, by the play of competition. That day is passing. How can the benefits of unrestricted competition be retained without its disadvantages? This question is much more fundamental and involved than is often realized, especially by industrialists themselves. It is not just a matter of "protecting the rights of consumers" in a static sense, but that of directing a changing and developing industrial system. A key point is the determination of prices. If these are fixed by employers' associations, they will depend on fortuitous factors like the existence of alternative products, what the market will bear, and

the power (legal or otherwise) of the association to maintain its monopoly. (Note that we are not so much concerned with the price-level—a monetary problem—as with the relative prices of commodities.) A properly related price system, flexible and based on actual costs, is essential if industry is to respond to consumers' needs. It must be possible to identify pockets of profiteering (whether by employers or workers), inefficiency and stagnation of technique, and to eliminate them. Industry must produce the right kinds of things as well as the right quantities.

Two points should be noted. Firstly, sensitivity to the needs of consumers does not entail pampering every individual whim, any more than democracy implies individual anarchy. Indeed, an industry regulated by the long-run interest of consumers as a whole would avoid stimulating demands for new fads and gadgets in the hope of profits. Secondly, control in the interests of consumers is not urged because of a perverse belief in the benefits of "control" as such. It is because the ordinary "price, competition and profit" mechanism is being unavoidably weakened not only by government control, but equally by organization within industry, and something must be put in its place. Ultimately, however, the issue is one of *responsibility*. If those in power in each firm and industry are effectively responsible to the wider body of consumers, then supervision, though still requiring sound machinery, will be relatively straightforward. If power within industry is held irresponsibly—by those concerned solely with the interests of their own trade or firm—then attempts to supervise *from outside* will be difficult and erratic, and will entail rigidity, and red tape.

There is an analogy from the public services. We are clear enough that the Civil Service does not exist in order to provide a number of comfortable jobs for people; its sole reason for existence lies in the actual service which it gives. Yet we know very well that this criterion cannot be made effective merely by asserting it, or by occasional indignation directed against a particularly serious abuse. It requires the continual check of parliamentary responsibility and Treasury control—and even these things may not be fully effective! The relation of industry to the community is similar, though the machinery of control may be (indeed will be) very different. Factories do not exist primarily to give employment or to promote good relations between management and workers; that would be as inadequate a definition of their purpose as to say that they exist only to

provide dividends for shareholders. The basic function of an industrial unit is to provide goods which are needed. However great freedom is given within certain limits to managers and to workers to determine the conditions and methods of production, in some way or other this basic responsibility to the community must be made effective in organizational terms.

The conclusion seems plain. It is hopelessly inadequate in peace-time to trust to the *general* supremacy of the political machine (that is, of Parliament) to keep organized producers sensitive to the needs of the community. Parliament may be able to deal with an occasional case of blatant abuse; but routine and day-to-day responsibility entails proper machinery for that purpose.

ACTION

What are the key points in the industrial machine where change is going on, and to which attention should be given if the above analysis is true? The following suggestions are not comprehensive; indeed there is much room for experiment and fresh thinking on this problem.

(1) A proper price system must be based not on custom nor on the relative powers of organizations, but on objective information. "Cost accountancy" is already familiar in the internal control of large undertakings. The same technique is capable of extension so as to permit of supervision of costs and prices in industry as a whole. A recent series of articles¹ in *The Accountant* show a clear awareness both of the need and of the tools available to meet it.

As a minimum policy, monopolistic powers should only be granted to organized trades or to groups of producers when there is public supervision of costs with access to the financial books of the component undertakings. "Efficiency audits" are as essential as financial audits, for, from the standpoint of the community, inefficiency may be as harmful as dishonesty.

(2) One of the most important happenings within industry to-day is the growth of a self-conscious "manager class" with its own professional organs and ethos. Important changes, too, are going on in the public services. The war has revealed weaknesses in

both the central and local government services, but has rendered a permanent extension of these services almost inevitable; departures from the traditional status and recruitment of public servants will be necessary. Yet, now that we are some generations from the original Civil Service Commission, it is easy to forget the great step forward in public administration which that Commission entailed. In the words of W. A. Robson, "Let us remember that an honest and efficient public service is a rare phenomenon in the world and something of a novelty even in England." Much will depend on the quality and real responsibility of these related professions of industrial management and public administration.

(3) The constitutions of controlling organs in industry, especially at the conclusion of the war, will need careful scrutiny to avoid concentration of irresponsible power in the hands of interested parties. Direct "consumer representation" is difficult, but should be attempted wherever possible; remembering that the mere appointment of a "consumer representative" without giving him adequate backing may give a false sense of security. This country has one real advantage in any attempt to achieve effective representation of consumers, in that over a quarter of its households are organized in the consumers' co-operative movement. This movement is, to some extent, able to act in the interests of men and women as consumers in the same way as the trade unions have been able to represent them as workers.

(4) Whatever form of industrial organization emerges, there should be wide scope for non-profit-making undertakings which are responsible to those who use the services they provide. Such undertakings may be statutory (like the Port of London Authority) or voluntary (like co-operative societies). If their consumer control is genuine, they should be given a wide measure of freedom and not unnecessarily restricted within the limits imposed on private undertakings. In this way, concentrations of power in industrial combines and in the central government may be reduced and room may be left for local initiative and experiment.

Yours sincerely,

X

¹ Now reprinted as a pamphlet entitled *The Future of Auditing*, by the City Library, 27-28 Basinghall Street, London, E.C. 2.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.



THE ONE AND DIVIDED RUSSIA

By E. LAMPERT

It is now a year since Hitler invaded Russia, and she became Britain's ally. But although their destinies are welded together in this great and tragic historical moment, it is scarcely possible to speak of their real inner unity. For many years relations between Britain and Russia had been mishandled on both sides. Each country was abysmally ignorant of the other, and in consequence suspicious of the other's intentions. Even the new Anglo-Soviet treaty, though vast in its significance and even vaster in its possibilities, represents no more than a skeleton which must be clothed with living flesh. The agreement between the two governments must be completed and deepened by a greater accord between the peoples. The historical hour in which they have met is precious: it calls for a more integral mutual comprehension and understanding.

This is an attempt at a psychological interpretation of some important aspects of the Russian problem.

THE TWO RUSSIAS

There are many writing about Soviet Russia to-day who insist on the impossibility of seeing her through the eyes of the West: she must, they say, be understood within the framework of her own historical development, and she cannot be criticized according to Western European standards and traditions. This raises the highly important question of the continuity of pre- and post-revolutionary Russia; more, the very problem of Russia to-day becomes the problem of her historic, national and cultural unity.

The first condition of history and culture is the national distinctiveness of the people. How are we to define the essence of the Russian? The character of a people is a unity of widely-differing and often contradictory trends. To avoid losing ourselves in an endless variety, the collective soul of Russia may, therefore, be reduced to two

distinct types. These two types create that tension which alone makes the life and movement of her changing organism possible. Let us consider the first of them.

This Russian is above all a restless, eternal seeker and enthusiast, who gives himself completely in his self-dedication and sacrificial ardour. He is permeated by a passionate love for his ideals: for God (or sometimes idols), for man and for the supreme values of human life—its freedom and creativeness. He is the implacable foe of every falsehood and compromise, and a maximalist in the service of his faith. He is never tied to earthly things, or bound up with his rights and privileges, and sometimes finds himself plunged into an atmosphere of futility and uprootedness. Of the four elements he is nearest to fire. This is the side of Russian nature which is often called its breath, its abounding freedom and revolutionary spirit. It sometimes finds an outlet in revelling and abandonment, in fantastically fast living, in intemperate and artistic great-heartedness and generosity. In religious language, this is a definitely eschatological type of man, who has no "abiding city" but "seeks one to come," a "new heaven and a new earth." More than anything, he hates moderation and formalism, the virtue of measure and reasonableness, and the philistinism of self-satisfied civilization. In general, he is unmoved by the perfection of forms, and longs to re-cast all form in his melting-pot. He would probably regard Dostoevsky as his supreme spokesman and expression. This is above all the portrait of the Russian intelligentsia, which played such a large part in the new "Petersburg" culture and grew up out of the meeting of Russia and the West in the eighteenth century; but which at the same time expresses some of the deepest features of Russian national consciousness.

The other type shows almost opposite characteristics: a deep tranquillity, reticence,

and even unconcernedness; a childlike simplicity, a dislike of exaltation, gesture, words; a calm and self-confident strength. Calm and simplicity are here the counterpart of the tendency to abound in freedom. Care-free joy and gaiety will never satisfy the Russian for long: he always ends in earnest, and often tragically. If he does not take rein in time, he finds himself utterly ruined, or else . . . in a monastery. Kindness, pity and silent wisdom are innate in this second type. But he can equally be cruel, not so much in momentary passionate outbursts, as in calm insensitiveness and oriental indifference to his neighbour's fate and sufferings. We are struck by his laziness: he works only if forced to do so. But often he pulls himself together at the very last moment, and then, not sparing himself, is capable of making up for months of idleness in a few days of creative effort. Without this the building up of the Russian Empire, of Russian pre-revolutionary civilization in all its richness and variety, as well as of the new Soviet civilization, would have been impossible. Behind his reticence there is an innate deep experience of the Russian East. Hence comes a strain of fatalism: hence also a sense of humour, like a smile at the vanity and cares of life. He is often at his gloomiest when he appears outwardly most humorous. The sense of humour and reservedness brings this type of Russian nearest of all to the English. Incidentally, it is said that a true sense of humour is peculiar only to the English and to us. Tolstoy and his Russia would probably feel themselves most at home in Europe in the English element. But, of course, behind the affinity lie very different experiences: the activism of the Anglo-Saxon West and the fatalism of the Russian East—beneath which, however, seethe elemental and cosmic forces. In general, this Russian is bound up with Nature, with Mother Earth; Nature is for him not merely landscape, and still less an object of domination: he is immersed in her as in his mother's womb, and without her he knows no full and real life. This is the type of the "Muscovite" Russian: he has been welded by a toilsome and often tragic history.

FREE RUSSIA

The unity and duality of these two types of the Russian soul have determined the inner destiny of Russian history. However

sharp the historical break created by the Revolution, it was incapable of destroying the psychological continuity of life and the essential oneness of Russian nature; in fact it did but affirm them. And it is these two types which above all have created the psychological soil in which the most decisive problem of Russian life was to be lived out—the problem of the *relation of man and society*. This question has always tormented the Russian mind, and it has become the underlying issue of contemporary Russia.

It would be a grave mis-statement to presume, as many in England do to-day—in an effort to explain certain real or imaginary vices of Bolshevik society—that the Russian never knew the sanctity of the human personality and freedom, that he is naturally inclined to "totalitarianism" and slavery. In point of fact the Russian, as described in the first instance, is born with a burning awareness of the unique and supreme value of human personality and freedom. His spirit of abundant freedom has always been opposed to all external efforts to make man merely functional, and turn him into a screw in any social machine whatever; to make him the slave of any purpose which has no relation to man's living, personal destiny. This spirit of freedom has expressed itself in various ways in Russian life and culture. It already breathes in the first monument of Russian literature, the "Slovo o Polku Igoreve" (The Lay of Igor's Raid), now known all the world over from Borodin's famous opera, "Prince Igor." It found its expression in the Cossack movement, and in numerous revolutionary movements throughout the history of Russia; it is manifested in certain types of Russian Christian saints; it is witnessed to in the nineteenth century by the whole of Russian literature, by Russian religious thought, and the prophetic message of the Russian intelligentsia, whose whole existence was inspired by compassion for suffering mankind and by the struggle for freedom. Even now it is alive in Stalin's "totalitarian" Russia. This freedom sounded in the first outburst of the Revolution itself: it sounds to-day in the exploits of the Polar explorers, and in the reckless daring of the Soviet airmen and guerilla fighters. All that is radiant in Soviet life and culture to-day makes us conscious of the beating of the same Russian heart, its love of freedom unbroken, though it has passed through terrible trials and cataclysms.

Yet the Russian love of freedom has little in common with the liberalism and individualism of the Western democratic tradition, which, although it was greatly inspired by the sanctity of the human personality, has often led to self-isolation, to high walls around human dwelling-places, and the loss of spiritual integrity.

THE SEARCH FOR UNITY

There is, however, the other type of Russian. He sees human life not so much in the self-affirmation of personality as in the out-going to the "other one"—to other people, to society, to the world. For him existence has meaning only in fellowship; he even tends to understand the very word "individual" as a negation of the fullness of life. His bond with nature makes individual existence strange and difficult. All this creates the ethos of collectivity, of universality and mutual solidarity. In the Western European world, with its affirmation of the individual, of the civil liberties and rights of every man, he saw, rightly or wrongly, the coming spiritual disintegration of culture and civilization. This spirit has given Russia the strength to preserve a deep and essentially organic unity of outlook. The idea of community and fellowship is one of the underlying themes of Russian life. Russian folklore, Russian poets and writers have expressed this primeval longing for unity and oneness. The Russian has seldom seen even God in His transcendent glory above and outside the world. He always saw Him with man on earth, rather than in heaven. The image of the humiliated Christ was one of his deepest Christian inspirations. This image lies behind the social outlook of the "repentant" Russian aristocracy, behind the movement of "narodniki" ("lovers of the people"), behind the peasant Christ of Tolstoy, and the mysterious Red Army Christ drawn by the great poet Alexander Blok. It is especially important to bear in mind this thirst for unity when we attempt to understand life in Soviet Russia. Whatever the political and economic significance of the Russian Revolution, its spiritual, psychological and cultural content is defined above all by the aspiration to a positive unification of life.

In the unity and tension of these two attitudes the relation of man and society was worked out in Russian life. Perhaps this is

the only way in which the problem can be solved at all; for there can be no truly personal existence without the supra-personal or extra-personal in life; for there is no personality if it is but a tool for these supra-personal values. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to true society. The Russian is repelled both by the sacrifice of the living, concrete personality to any idea whatever, and by the sacrifice of the supreme idea in the interest of the individual. Not in vain has it been said that the Russian thinks and feels in terms of the *life of the Church*: for ultimately the paradox of the relation between the personal and supra-personal is given in the Church alone, as the only perfect community. This explains why it is typical of Russian Christian thought to connect the drama of the salvation of the human personality with the drama of universal cosmic being. Social and individual existence is for the Russian one organic life in love and freedom. However abstract this statement may sound, such was and is the great and living Russian ideal. This has brought with it the possibility of unique social and economic implications, which have expressed a strong tendency to socialization: they defined the value of man not according to what he *has*, but according to what he *is* in the unity of personal and common life. (Already in early Muscovite Russia the state economy had a Christian, semi-socialist character.)

THE STATURE OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

Nevertheless, this remained a possibility which, alas, by no means always materialized. Actually life in Russia was and still is full of the struggle between the personal and the collective principles. The affirmation of the human personality has constantly been threatened by the temptation of what may be called "homo-deism"; it has given birth to the image of the man-god, of the man who in his demonic self-affirmation has put himself in place of God, in such figures as the heroes of Dostoevsky's novels. Much in the Russian Revolution may be understood in the light of Dostoevsky's profound intuitions. The Russians are more likely to produce the anti-Christ than a secularized, neutral and individualistic culture of the Western European type. So far from having been deprived of the feeling for personality, the Russian has on the contrary often been unable to support

its dynamism and intensity, and has yielded to self-deification. Here man became an idol, and built up his idolatrous kingdom. And we know that this idol, like all others, demands sacrifices, and often ends in destroying man for the sake of man. Again, we have been shown something of this during the period of the revolutionary reconstruction of Russian society: in its godless and, therefore, inhuman manifestations; in its grandiose plans and projects of domination over life without God, by the power of human reason and creativeness alone.

But danger also threatens the Russian from the other side. His cosmic outlook tends to absorb and dissolve his personal consciousness, turns him into a mere atom in the dynamic unity of cosmic and social life. He knows the smallness and weakness of individual existence in face of the depths of being. It is difficult for the Russian to recognize the hierarchical order of personal and social values; he returns perpetually to their re-valuation. In general, the principles of hierarchy and authority are spiritual forms which the Russian refuses to acknowledge willingly, frequently preferring their realization by compulsion. Sometimes the fear of making a free choice between values leads him to evil resignation and submissiveness, to which some features of the pre-revolutionary Empire as well as of the Soviet regime are striking witnesses. And yet this conceals a characteristic and ultimately justified dislike

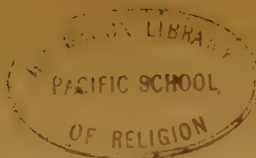
of the independence of any value, of any part of existence torn asunder from the whole; that is, from its living and ultimately religious roots.

Russia has lived and is living in the grip of all these contradictions: and with them is bound up the whole course of her complex history.

The Russian Revolution, determined mainly by these contradictions, has undoubtedly been a tremendous upheaval and split in Russian life. The Revolution alone—and what a Revolution!—could not but give a new turn to the national way of existence. A whole historical epoch was closed, a new page of life was opened: and the new was indeed different from the old. But, of course, this could not mean that the one Russian heart has ceased to beat, that the U.S.S.R., the Union of Eastern European Peoples, has lost its Russian national distinctiveness, and that it would be meaningless now or in the future to speak of the Russian people as the bearers of a unique and specific national consciousness and culture.

Russian culture is a temple built on a volcano: it is never complete, but is ever being perfected anew by the lava of the last eruption. The building is shaken by subterranean shudders, and threatens to collapse on its builders, just because it cannot always endure the fire of the inner furnace. But the temple stands while the volcano seethes; and it is burning now, burning as never before.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.



CONCERNING OBEDIENCE

By F. B. WELBOURN

It has rightly been said that perhaps the central issue confronting society to-day is the importance of personal relationships, the difference between the *World of Thou* and the *World of It*. But I am not happy, either that there is a clear understanding of the nature of personal relationship in its highest form; or that, in stressing the importance of right relationship with people, there is yet enough emphasis on right relationship of persons to things.

I

Perhaps the clue is to be found in a passage of Hebrews which, for me, at the moment, sums up and illuminates the whole Bible. "He learned obedience through the things which he suffered; and, having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. v. 8, 9). "He learned obedience"—our Lord had achieved that after which the whole Old Testament is striving. Obedience to God is surely the central theme of both Old and New Testaments; and it is the triumphant declaration of the New that in Christ, but only in Him, obedience can be learned. Notice that it is on "obedience," rather than on "perfection," that the stress is laid—on an active relationship with the will of God, rather than on the completion of our own personality. Doubtless, in the end, we shall all be made perfect; but obedience is the stuff out of which perfection is moulded.

What, then, is obedience? In order to avoid confusion, I want to distinguish three senses in which the word is used: 1. The full personal quality of obedience which is the theme of this supplement, involving *willing* co-operation with God and with the *true* nature of other people and things, as He created them and intends them to be. 2. Outward obedience, without full personal consent, to the *rightful* demands of others, which is frequently necessary in practical affairs.

3. Unqualified submission to the demands of others, whether their demands are rightful or wrongful. But obedience, as I here conceive it, is owed to the *true* nature of others; and, in the name of that true nature, it carries the obligation of resistance, perhaps of rebellion, when nature is corrupted and makes *wrongful* demands. There is no space to examine the implications of this distinction. But this supplement will be misunderstood unless it is made. Unqualified submission is owed to none but God; and, even then, it is but a step towards obedience in the fullest sense.

It seems to me significant that both obedience and its Greek equivalent, *ὑπακοή*, come from roots whose original meaning is "to hear." And, for the Old Testament, the privilege of hearing God is an intimacy granted only to a few great men, like Moses and the prophets. They are men who obey not blindly, as slaves; but as friends, understanding the Master's will and obeying Him because their whole inner nature is in agreement with Him. If a physical analogy is permissible, the difference is as that between a magnetic needle held in position by an external mechanical force, and the same needle swinging "freely" in a magnetic field, till it comes to rest with its internal molecular structure "in full agreement" with the magnetic lines of force. It is only in such full agreement with his actions that man achieves full responsibility for them; and only then is he wholly free. There is a difference between being pushed off a spring board and diving in. In both cases the law of gravity is obeyed; but only in the second case is the obedience free, responsible—so that it becomes co-operation with gravity instead of blind submission. And the result is the rapture of naked limbs cleanly cutting the water. To such rapturous co-operation with the will of God we are called: and obedience at that high level becomes worship. Only in such obedience lies the fullness of personal relationship.

But there is another question. Obedience is an activity of the will. Is, then, the highest expression of personality to be found in the will, rather than in intellect or emotion? It is a conception which many people find difficult to accept. But I think that a great deal of the difficulty lies in an implicit acceptance of the old psychology, in which intellect, emotion and will were regarded almost as independent faculties of the whole personality: to our fatal distinction between thinking and feeling on the one hand, and action on the other—as though thinking and feeling were not just as much as muscular action, activities of the whole person. If the will is to have any place in modern thought, it must be as the whole-person-in-action: not as a separate faculty, but as the whole active personality, guided by intellect and driven by the forces of instinct, appetite and emotion.

II

The will can express itself either in obedience or in striving for power. Do these two motives help to define more clearly the nature of right human relationships? To treat another person as the object of our lust for power is to be related to him as to an *It*. Does the essence of being related to him as a *Thou* lie in obedience to him? It is remarkable how often this idea occurs in St. Paul's epistles. The whole of his teaching on social relationships might be summed up in the words, "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. v. 21). As in our relationship with God, this is no matter of external obedience to arbitrary demands; the words "one to another" forbid such an interpretation. It is, rather, that, in the divinely appointed order of creation, every man has his own function to fulfil; and each is to pay to other the respect which is due to his standing with God. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. xiii. 7). Wives to their husbands, children to their parents, servants to their masters, all owe this duty of obedience. It is true that St. Paul does not go so far as to enjoin obedience in the opposite direction; but he does not come far from it. If obedience is required on one side, love, rather than lordship, is its counterpart. We are to "owe no man anything, save to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). And the whole is set in the

context of Christ's relationship to His Church, where the essence of lordship, of that personal character which commands the obedience of others, is seen to lie in love and service towards them. The meaning of obedience is transformed by our Lord's sufferings. "He learned obedience through the things which He suffered." In Him, obedience becomes not the duty of an inferior towards his superior, but the highest activity of persons; and the fullness of personal relationship is found in mutual obedience. If I understand the supplement to C.N.L. No. 132, it is very much this mutual obedience which Miss Follett has in mind when she speaks of "integration." In this sense it is really the equivalent of the New Testament word "love"; and, if I prefer to use the word "obedience," it is because it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the Christian love-relationship is one of personal will to personal will: that only at the level of will is the truth about human personality to be found.

In all our social relationships we have the opportunity to learn obedience—to learn, not to use other people for our own ends, not to force their development according to our ideas (or even the Church's ideas) of what is good for them: nor, through fear of cautioning them, to let their waywardness have free play: but to see each as a son of God in the making, each with his own particular contribution to give to the rich variety of God's family: and, learning to understand his nature, to adjust ourselves to it, to obey it, to encourage his growth towards the perfection of obedient will which God intends for him, and him alone. There can be no forcing of the growth, no attempts to train the sapling branches in fancy patterns of our own designing: nor any shirking of the responsibility to support them if they bend too fiercely under their own weight. Only in mutual obedience, in co-operation based on understanding and willing agreement, can the family of God come to its fullness in Christ.

There is a last daring thought about obedience between persons. If it is, indeed, the highest activity of personality, must it not be that the perfection of God is found in the perfection of His obedience? Certainly, if the identification of obedience with Christian love is right, we should have no hesitation about this. And it is wholly in line with our Lord's revelation of the true character of lordship. Miss Sayers throws an interesting

light on this when she says¹ that, once the writer has created a character, he cannot force it to do what he wants without distorting the whole picture. He must be obedient to its nature, co-operate with it in its natural development. It is the sign of an unskilled writer to force his characters to follow his will, without consideration of their own power of self-determination. To imaginative insight, it is unlikely in the extreme that Lord Peter should become a Christian or go on an expedition to the Antarctic. And it is just in this way that God treats the world He has made, limiting His power by obedience to its nature: not forcing its growth, but winning it by love to full agreement and adoring obedience. And only He is fully personal, because only He is perfectly obedient.

III

If we go further, to examine our right relationship with things, obedience is still the clue. For two points are clear. First, that, on our side, the relationship must be at the fully personal level. And, second, that things do not exist simply for the benefit of man; they have a standing and rights of their own, an appointed function in the created order. It is true that man is to "subdue the earth" and is given "dominion over every living thing" (Gen. i. 28). But this is not arbitrary power to do what he likes with things. It is a stewardship which he holds from God, for the fulfilment of God's purpose in creation; and, as has been said already, the essence of lordship lies, not in power, but in obedience to the subjects. This is a truth, as it affects man's relationship to things, which the craftsman well understands; for he recognises that his skill lies in obedience to the nature of his tools and of the material with which he works. He knows what they can, and cannot, do; and he does not try to force them to other purposes. His skill is his power of adjustment to the tools and materials at his disposal.² There was a time when scientists, like Julian Huxley, based man's biological supremacy on his power of adjustment to his environment: on this very quality of obedience. If, now, the emphasis has shifted to man's *control* of his environment, his power over it, it is not that he finds

justification for this view in science: rather, that his lust for power has been nourished on the astounding successes of the applied physical sciences. But it is a very one-sided emphasis. We have tended to treat the physical environment as a passive lump of clay, to be moulded into any shape we wish; and we have been so successful that we begin to want to treat people in the same way. But it remains that we can control nature only by co-operating with her, by being obedient to her laws; and even a lump of clay has a nature of its own, a rigidity without which all moulding would be impossible. It is not simply passive, but resistant to our handling; and this natural resistance increases up the scale of being till we reach the strong-willed man.

If the environment has been regarded as purely passive, waiting only the triumphant advance of knowledge to be moulded as we please, man has, by contrast, acted as though he were *impassible*—unaffected by the changes which he produces in his environment. But to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. We cannot change our environment without, at the same time, producing a corresponding change in ourselves. The very welcome results of industrial development at the material level are countered by the spiritual crisis of modern society. The development of mass-production methods, fruitful as it is in increasing the standard of living, and hopeful for the reduction of the hours of work, yet entails such a manifold division of labour that the old craftsmanship—the relationship of the workman in full intellectual and moral responsibility to his produce and to his customers—is all but eliminated. Man ceases to be a responsible creator; and the functions of design, responsibility and execution are assigned—not exclusively, it is true, but to a great extent—to different classes of industrial society, as the old psychology divided the whole person into separate faculties, each with its own function to perform.³ The very methods which reduce the hours of work make those which remain monotonous, if not intolerable. It may be that this is but a phase in a forward movement towards a time when men will find their creative activities in long hours of leisure. And, though we may fear

¹ *The Mind of the Maker*, Chapter IX.

² See Eric Gill's *Autobiography*.

³ Both Eric Gill's *Autobiography* and, from a Marxist angle, Christopher Caudwell's *The Crisis in Physics* have valuable things to say on this point.

the Leisure State, we have no right to condemn it in advance. But the point is that every step in man's control over his environment lets loose new natural forces, which he can learn to control only by once more learning to obey them.

IV

Neither is nature passive, nor man impassible. But at one and the same time both are active and both are passive, each is itself changed in the act of changing the other. And here the text from Hebrews is again the clue. "He learned obedience through the things which he *suffered*." There is, perhaps, no word in the English language which has changed more disastrously in its colloquial meaning. To-day, "to suffer" is almost the equivalent of "to *feel pain*." But, in its original meaning, as in the sentence, "Suffer little children to come unto me," it has nothing to do either with *feeling* or with *pain*. To suffer is the opposite of "to act." It is to have things done *to* us, whether pleasant or unpleasant things, and irrespective of the subjective feeling which they induce: just as the Passion of our Lord is primarily the things which man did to Him, rather than the mental agony which accompanied them and which, for popular devotion, seems to be the main point of emphasis. It is a startling commentary on a Christian England that its language has now no words to be the converse of "act" or "action": that "passive" is a term most usually of reproach: and that we are concerned more for subjective experience than for the acts of God. Our Lord's agony—let me say it in all humility, and gratitude that He should have endured it—is of secondary importance to the fact that He underwent¹ it at the hands of men: that He, the Creator and Lord of all, should take on Him the form of a servant: that, for us men and for our salvation, He should let men do things to Him and work their evil will with

Him. Could obedience find more colossal or more fearful manner of expression? And His Word to us is that we, too, should lay less stress on action, learn to see and to understand and to obey the things which God is doing to us, as He acts for our ultimate good through the perplexing movements of history. "We have been so intent on creating the kind of world in which God will feel 'at home,' that we have not asked ourselves whether we are at home in the world in which He is acting."² We have to learn to suffer. To suffer—I am sure that I do not yet know what that means. Certainly it does *not* mean that we sit down and do nothing; for inactivity is the most vicious form of action. We suffer, have things done to us, whether we are active or inactive. And, if we try simply to suffer and not to act, the very trying is itself an action. Perhaps the first step is just that we should become conscious of this unity of action and reaction: "Action is suffering and suffering action"³; that we should try to enter into the meaning of St. Paul's words, "Work out your own salvation, . . . for it is God that worketh in you" (Phil. ii. 12 f.). The tragedy of the strong-willed man, who pursues his course impervious to circumstances, is that he *is* changed by the circumstances he tries to ignore, or to mould to his unchanging purpose. He tries to exercise his will in power, whereas the test of a truly strong will lies in its capacity, like our Lord, to learn obedience. We have to learn to lay the emphasis no longer on control of our environment, of our own evolution, but on obedience to God, to other people and to things: not to ride superior to circumstances, nor to submit to them; but to accept them, with the whole active conscious self, as God's action for our good; to become obedient to them, and thus to make them opportunities of creative action. Is not this the significance of the victorious agony of Gethsemane?

¹ Even "undergo" suggests undergoing something unpleasant.

² *The Student Movement*, April–May, 1942, page 111.

³ T. S. Eliot: *Murder in the Cathedral*, 4th edition, page 40.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 21 NORTHMOOR ROAD, OXFORD.

JULY 29TH, 1942



CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION AND EUROPE

(The substance of an address delivered to the Royal Institute of International Affairs and published with its permission.)

By BARBARA WARD

THE NATURAL LAW

Europe is not a geographical concept ; it is the creation of a religion. Christianity made Europe. This underlying metaphysical basis of society was the source of its incredible richness, produced great variety and diversity within a higher unity, and has made its civilization a central factor in the development of a world order.

Christianity had its strong basis in classical civilization, and one of the elements which it took from classical civilization was that the basis of society was intimately linked with Natural Law, that there was a right ordering of society, that society was not merely a matter of choice, of historical development, of the clash of blind economic forces, but that underlying any true society there was a permanent order which was universal and above all local manifestations thereof. This conception, which was fundamental to the society of the Middle Ages, has been increasingly undermined during the last two or three hundred years by the splitting up of Europe into national States which took to themselves more and more of the powers formerly left to super-national law.

There has been a corresponding change in the position of Christianity. Underneath all the religious differences of dogma and Church allegiance was a very general acceptance of the fundamental rule of law which made it possible for some kind of international community of States to exist. But since the rise of Communism and Fascism even this underlying agreement has disappeared. People have disagreed not only about their religious allegiance but about the very nature of society itself, and about the relation between man and the State and the whole of Natural Law. When that happens, the divisions within Christianity are counterbalanced by a new division in which Christian people find

themselves on the side of many men of goodwill who, while having no Christian allegiance, sympathise with Christians of every communion in supporting the fundamental rights of man, the idea of the rule of law, and the subordination of the State to that rule. All these conceptions divide them off from the new totalitarian faiths which base social progress on a blind historical process, produced either by the clash of economic interests or by the will to power of the racial community. An entirely new situation has, therefore, developed, and this is the background of Christian co-operation.

CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION

Since the coming to the pontificate of Pope Pius XII a new directive, a new inspiration has come from Rome to encourage Catholic participation in co-operation. For example, in the Pope's allocution of December 1939 was the appeal to all men of goodwill for a crusade to bring society back from "the broken cistern of material interests to the fountain of Divine Justice." This has been followed by other appeals, urging those who believe in God and the fellowship of Christ to come together in defence of the basis of European civilization—of the Christian tradition threatened by the new totalitarian State. This appeal was taken up by Cardinal Hinsley when he founded the *Sword of the Spirit*, a movement that has taken the leading part on the Catholic side in bringing about co-operation at the level of the observance of the Natural Law—the defence of the basic human freedom of the citizen, of the integrity of the family, of the right of free association, of the subordination of the State to the interests of the common good, and the subordination of the national community to the international community.

There is not space here to give much of the evidence of co-operation in Europe. I will take only one example—the most notable, that of Germany itself. In standing for the rights of their own bodies, the Christian communions in Germany have in recent years invariably included the rights and privileges and the fundamental spiritual freedom of their fellow Christians. A new step was taken in a very remarkable joint Pastoral Letter signed by all the German Bishops and issued this spring. They say: "We wish particularly to stress that we are standing not only for religious and ecclesiastical rights, but the ordinary rights of mankind. Each of us is interested in respect of the maintenance of these rights, without which Western culture must collapse." The Pastoral goes on: "Everyone has a natural right to personal freedom within the limits of service to God and consideration of one's fellow men and the common good. We, German Bishops, protest against this disregard of personal freedom, demand the legal examination of all punitive measures relating to all those who, without evidence, were robbed of their freedom. Secondly, everyone has the natural right to life. The Creator alone is master over life and death." Then the Bishops bitterly attack the massacre of incurables, of which several instances in Germany are quoted. "We German Bishops will not cease to protest against the killing of innocent people. No one is sure of life in spite of the commandment: Thou shalt not kill." Then they go on to say: "Everyone has the natural right to the possession of justly acquired property and the protection of private property against arbitrary intervention. Everyone has the natural right to the protection of his honour against libel and slander." The issues raised go deeper than a simple defence of a particular Christian community. In a society where the ability to proclaim anything has practically vanished, the Pastoral was read in every Catholic church all over Germany, and the basic freedom of man was proclaimed in the midst of this ghastly struggle.

THE CONTENT OF FREEDOM

How is this going to affect the future? The kind of opposition of which the Germans complain, from Norway to Greece, gives the impression of having fully formulated and fully agreed upon one point only—the restoration of freedom. The idea of freedom, of restoring national independence, of putting

an end to the police State and to the Gestapo, of restoring the due process of law—all these things which were taken for granted in the liberal world are the conceptions which to-day unite the Czechs, the Poles, the Serbs. The local Communist, the local priest, the local mayor are now united on a common front. But it is a very broad common front and it is not a front upon which you can build very much. The issue is too wide, and it is not linked in the minds of the people now fighting underground with a positive and unifying philosophy of life. It is not going to be any guarantee that Europe will not fall away into complete confusion. The question is whether the aspiration of freedom can be changed into the "glorious liberty of the children of God," whether Christianity, acting through the co-operation of Christians or the coming together of Christian and non-Christian men of goodwill, can bring about the acceptance of the social and political and religious implications of the ideal of freedom.

I would like to suggest two things. First of all, whether it is through the mouth of Bishop Berggrav or of a Patriarch in Greece, only one body of people in Europe is saying roughly the same thing. The voice of Christianity is speaking for a great many of those fundamental rights and freedoms for which we are fighting. Christians are committed, even if still only unconsciously, to the Natural Law—to the conception of an order of society in which the natural rights and obligations of the citizen are balanced, all the way up the scale from the individual soul to the international community. All over Europe there is thus still one body of people teaching for example that opportunism is the death of society. We have seen under the Nazis the most extraordinary reversal of the values that held society together. We had assumed that men naturally were a whole lot of things which only the most intensive discipline over hundreds of years of religious education had made them, and we were astonished when in the Nazis we began to see the sub-pagan type; we were amazed at the brutality and ruthlessness of the society which began to emerge, and we found that a society divorced utterly from this conception of the Natural Law was ceasing not only to be good but rapidly ceasing to be even human.

A QUESTION OF INSTITUTIONS

How are we to act, after the terribly brutalising effect of this war, when the passions aroused by horror and suffering have brought

men to a state of mass hysteria, anarchy and hatred rising to the pitch of moral madness? It seems crass optimism to suppose that on this human material you can build up some kind of functioning new order if you take no note of the moral discipline and of the spiritual substance which Christianity can give. We may have to deal with a continent whose immediate danger is not to adopt this or that form of national or political life, but to collapse into a welter of nihilism.

Here the Christian bodies throughout Europe have a double significance. It is not only their teaching of self-discipline and brotherly love that is vitally important. There is also the fact of their existence as organized institutions. Under the Nazis, the mere existence of a platform, of a pulpit, takes on a significance which it never had before. Europe is like a country over which a tornado has passed. It has torn up all the landmarks and institutions, and destroyed universities and schools. Practically speaking, the only institutions which remain as a continuous link with Europe's past, and all the good in Europe's past, are these Christian Churches—the pulpit from which the German Pastoral was read, from which Bishop Berggrav was able to read out his defiance of Quisling.... This institutional fact is one which I think we tend to disregard and which is actually one of immense importance. In a Europe from which all institutions have been wiped out, there still exists a great network of organized bodies who speak with the voice of Europe and which still recognise those loyalties to freedom for which we say we are fighting.

POSITIVE PEACE AIMS

We have, of course, to admit the terrific difficulties in the situation. It is true that the four freedoms of President Roosevelt are completely compatible with the Christian conception of the Natural Law. But they are couched in the most general terms, as also is Natural Law. There is an enormous amount of work to be done before it can be brought home to the Christian peoples of Europe that there is a relation between these professions of general purpose and the kind of immediate problems with which they are faced. I do not see how we can appeal to these constructive Christian elements in Europe above the din of war if our peace aims are completely unformulated. If we are going to canalise the goodwill diffused by Christian co-operation, and build on it a

more stable Europe, it can only be on a basis of hard and fast commitments. We cannot convince people simply by recalling general principles which are never given any particular concrete application.

Another factor is the very widespread fear of Communism which Hitler has exploited. Many of the Christian bodies of Europe were frightened into supporting Hitler on the bolshevik bogey, and something very definite indeed has got to be done to prove to these people that the new order in Europe is not simply going to be a sacrifice by Britain of Europe to Communism. That is what Hitler's propaganda is telling them day in and day out, and until it can be shown that the kind of collaboration which can be built up between Russia and Britain is a concrete manifestation of the four freedoms, Goebbels can carry on. Such things as the Anglo-Russian alliance give little idea of what that co-operation will be. I feel it is possible to solve the difficulty if Britain and the United States are prepared to "go into" Europe—to put their material power and wealth as well as their moral idealism to the task of building a stable European order on the basis of Christian tradition and the Natural Law. Behind such an endeavour the vast resources (for they *are* vast) of the Christian communities of Europe can be mobilised. The principles of such a peace settlement should be so developed that the Christian bodies in Europe can regard them as compatible with a Christian order and as something with which they can collaborate. Thus it would be something for which they could begin to speak now, from the pulpit they command. This is a propaganda entry point into Europe which it would be folly to under-estimate; but it does depend upon a serious determination on our part to commit ourselves to Europe now, to commit ourselves to a peace settlement now, and not to leave, as hitherto we have left, that complete confusion of mind which Hitlerite propaganda can exploit at every turn.

SUPER-NATIONAL LOYALTIES

There is one last point which seems to me to be vital to Christian co-operation in the future. We are doubtless all agreed on certain broad forms of organization and institutions for Europe, without which we shall only repeat the follies and tragedies of the last war. I imagine that all are agreed that there must be an international system based upon law backed by force and an international eco-

nomic system designed to promote the prosperity of Europe and to raise general standards of living. Now such a system demands in fact an international political organization, an international society, a confederation, call it what you will, which is going to be *super-national*. But where are you going to get the loyalty, the interest, the enthusiasm for this kind of super-national organization, if the highest loyalty you can draw upon is loyalty to the nation State? I think you can get it to some degree, because it has been proved conclusively that for the survival of the nation itself we must transcend nationalism. In the modern world of great industrial power centres, unless there is an international organization into which small nations can be integrated, they cannot survive. But that is really a very negative kind of loyalty. Where are we to find the positive loyalty which is going to build up a genuine international order and really embody the concept of the essential unity of Europe?

It would be folly to under-estimate the resources of Christianity in creating a loyalty, an enthusiasm and a sense of obligation and fellowship which transcends the limits of the national State. This is a problem which no one can settle merely by legislating. It goes to the deep springs of human life and can only come about by a renewal of life at its deepest level. You can crush it out by neglect, by legislating against it, or building up an order from which it is systematically banished. You can also encourage it by giving it support and by challenging it to produce this loyalty, this enthusiasm, this new strength. That is a problem which ought to concern all democratic peoples. If you are not going to have a State directed dynamism or ideology, where are you going to get that energy, that power without which you cannot run a really organic and functioning society? It is an awful dilemma. You can have a static, stagnant society, which at a low level is fairly free—a commercial society, for example. Or you can have a dynamic, energetic, powerful society which is also a tyranny, because the most frightful form of tyranny

is the creation of a State religion, which means not only physical tyranny but spiritual tyranny as well. It is only when there are two principles of order, religious and civil, that you can hope to provide both freedom and dynamism. It is only if your citizens are drawing on their religious faith for their energy, power, devotion, and higher ideals, that you can keep freedom and spontaneous organization throughout a society which is disciplined and constructively planned. If this is true of nations, it is even more true of any European society.

WORK FOR TO-DAY

There is so much factual, material, institutional fabric in Christian Europe to-day, that to ignore it and make no appeal to the Christian resources seems the height of unreality. Therefore, I would say that the real meaning of Christian co-operation for the future consists of three things. First, the creation here amongst Christians of a vigorous, intelligent, determined public spirit, both national and international. Next, the action of this opinion upon our governments to secure an order in Europe compatible with the "four freedoms" to which we are politically committed. Then, finally, there is the putting across of this idea to Europe by every resource of propaganda, and particular appeal to those who are committed through their Christianity to the same principles, so that they can be ready for collaboration the moment it becomes possible. We have here in this country and in the U.S.A., and throughout a large section of the allied world, a common faith in the rights of man, in personal freedom, the integrity of the family, the right of free association, the subordination of the State to the common good, the creation of an international society in which law and not arbitrary rule will be the foundation. That is an enormous sum of common ground to set against the differences which still divide us, and if we cannot draw upon this common faith which exists among the peoples of Europe, then perhaps we do not deserve to build a new order at all.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



FOURTEEN TO EIGHTEEN

By THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I feel myself in full agreement with almost everything that was said on this subject in the Christian News-Letter of June 3rd (No. 136). The proposals I am now making gradually formed themselves in my mind as I tried to think out what ought actually to be done for all boys and girls up to eighteen. The proposals took shape after discussions in a small group of teachers of all kinds.

When we, in this group, tried to sum up the result of our discussions, we said to ourselves: "Let us start by taking as seriously and concretely as we can the implication of the State's responsibility." The terrible picture given in the report on *The Young Adult in South Wales* shows how disastrously decisive the year between seventeen and eighteen may be. The incidence of unemployment seems then to be greatest. A year of unemployment at that age might easily dissipate all that has been gained by longer schooling at an earlier age. The waste of these later years as revealed in the Carnegie Report, of which the Welsh report is a fragment, is so appalling that it cannot be allowed to continue, and the remedy of this evil seems to us therefore more important than anything else. We believe it to be all important that boys and girls should arrive at their eighteenth birthday trained, fit in body and mind, equipped with skill, ready to play their part as active citizens, and we want a plan which is complete for the four years from fourteen to eighteen and is immediately practicable after the war.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

These considerations led us first to an unexpected conclusion. All the teachers present considered that it is practicable to raise the school leaving age for *all* to fifteen plus immediately after the war. We think the senior schools could so deal with all those boys and girls who do not go to secondary schools of one kind or another, that all would gain from their last years and would neither be bored nor waste their time. The

senior schools would be able to give the whole of the programme for which they were planned, if they had this extra year. On the other hand we do not consider on the evidence we could collect that the school leaving age could be raised to sixteen plus immediately after the war and a good job made of it. Therefore, it seemed to us that the more we all mean business, the more necessary it is to avoid the danger of pressing for the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen, or of thinking too exclusively of raising the school age rather than of what is to happen between fifteen or sixteen and eighteen.

THE NON-BOOKISH MAJORITY

Another consideration worked powerfully on our minds. The headmaster of a senior school had much to tell us of the ordinary boys. He divided his boys into three classes, A, B and C. The A boys were of the type who would fairly easily go on to a technical school, who had what might be called natural intellectual interests. The C boys were the few at the bottom who were really difficult. The B boys were sixty per cent of the whole. They were not interested enough either in books or in handicrafts to desire to excel in the things which even the most modern school taught. I distrust such classifications, but I saw in time what the headmaster meant. At first I thought, quite wrongly, that he meant that the B boys, sixty per cent of the pupils, were nitwits. That, I was sure, is not true. In evidence of my assurance I cited two facts. If you ask a good company commander who knows his men how many of them are nitwits, he may say that there are a few such in the company but only a few. He will not put the percentage higher than two per cent or three per cent. He will not dream of agreeing that anything like fifty per cent or sixty per cent is the right figure. Then I thought of the boys I know in the country, from which most of the bright boys who can compete in examinations are drained

away. I find them reliable, intelligent, capable young men, though they have not what are sometimes called "intellectual interests."

I had, in any case, misunderstood the headmaster. He meant that those boys were the headmaster's difficulty because their interests were not easily aroused by lessons, and because they regarded the world after school as real, and school as a waiting period. I thought of George Meredith's picture in *The Egoist* of Crossjay Patterne, that admirable boy with all sorts of qualities and capacities but a radical aversion to books. I was confirmed in my view of what is wrong when I heard a director of education recount the marked effect which the air training scheme had had on those B boys. Their interest in aircraft had made mathematicians of them.

This all led us to one important general reflection. Our educational reforms up till now have mainly been directed to the construction of educational ladders by which the clever boy can escape from the rest—free places, scholarships of all kinds, technical colleges and county awards have been for the minority. That has led us to think of education in terms of what suits that minority, to press that the cultivation of that minority's special talents should not be impeded by accidents of wealth and birth. These efforts have been important. There is still much to do in seeing that the minority's talents are properly used. But this approach may easily make us judge quite wrongly of the education most needed for the great majority. It may also easily lead, and is already leading, to a stratification of the young in separate schools and educational castes according to the different nimbleness of their wits. That is no doubt better than a stratification determined by wealth, but not so very much better.

However that may be, our group proposed to start at the other end. We thought the problems of secondary education, the dispute about public and other secondary schools, the imperfections of the scholarship system and all that, important but fairly simple. We thought that the real crying problem of the moment was that of the majority, and we proposed to start with thinking about them. In 1938, 28 per cent of the boys and girls of this country were at school over the age of fourteen. The percentage diminished rapidly with every extra year. We started to think about the 72 per cent.

EDUCATION IN SCHOOL OR THROUGH A JOB?

Starting at that end, we came to the conclusion that if we were thinking of how boys and girls should get the best training possible up to eighteen, and if we were paying no regard whatever to the wealth or social position of their parents, we should not give them all full time school education up to eighteen. We thought that many boys after fifteen or sixteen learn more from the responsibilities of a job than they can from school, though they probably learn best from a combination of a job and part-time classes. They get their best training, not in the comparatively artificial atmosphere of whole time schooling, but in a job of the right kind which trains in skill and responsibility. This implies that at fifteen or sixteen many boys ought to go into industry, if we see that they are properly trained there.

If the objection is made, as it may well be, that this supplement began with a reference to the horrors produced by turning boys out of school into industry at the age of fourteen, and that it cannot make all the needed difference if they are turned out a year later, my answer is (1) that the horrors of the South Wales report came not so much from industry as from the lack of it—we shall come to the problem of unemployment later—and (2) that they also came from these boys being given over to industrial work in which there were no conditions to ensure that they were being taught a skill. There were, on the contrary, conditions to ensure that they were not so taught. It still remains true, in our opinion, that if we do not see to it that these boys get training in their job, they will get it nowhere else.

We must, therefore, take with the utmost seriousness the question of education through industry. The State, if it is responsible for the training of the young up to eighteen, must say to industry: "If these boys go to you, it is primarily because they will be best trained with you and we must see that you do train them. You are given these young people only on conditions strictly enforced." We must of course begin by seeing to it that boys and girls who would get more from continued secondary education should get it—that this industrial training is not a *pis aller* given to those who from poverty cannot afford anything better, but is the best education that can be given them.

DAY CONTINUATION SCHOOLS

The next thing to do is to apply the provisions of the Fisher Act about day continuation schools, and apply them universally. Rugby has the distinction of having applied the Fisher Act already. It has insisted that all boys and girls up to sixteen who are not at a whole time school should go to a continuation school for one day in the week. We were fortunate to get first hand reports on this Rugby experiment. We were convinced that it had been an obvious success. Rugby had certain advantages which made this experiment easier than it might be elsewhere. Nevertheless we are sure that the example of Rugby could and ought to be followed in all towns.

Thirdly, boys and girls at that age need holidays if they are in industry as much as if they were at school. If their physique is to have a chance they must have at least a month's holiday in the year.

Is that the end of the story? Full time education up to fifteen or sixteen and continuation school up to eighteen. That appears to be the orthodox programme of most reformers. We were not very happy about it. We were not sure that the day continuation school would work so well from sixteen to eighteen as it does from fourteen to sixteen. We doubted whether the youth organizations, however zealous, would have a chance to develop those other activities which Scouting or the County Badge are primarily concerned with. Above all, this scheme seemed to us to ignore two outstanding social facts—unemployment and military service.

THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT

There is not much unemployment up to sixteen. There is only too great a demand, of a kind, for boys and girls in industry at that age. But unemployment becomes very serious at seventeen, and it has at that age more disastrous consequences than at any other. What is wanted then, is an alternative training which is shared by everyone and has therefore no social stigma about it, which can be prolonged if unemployment makes it necessary. That consequence follows from the principle of training up to eighteen. If unemployment ruins the scheme of training through industry, something else must take its place.

Then we remembered that after the war we shall have military service at least for some time, and that a great part of modern

military training has nothing specially military about it. Drill and the use of weapons takes much less time than physical training, training which is intended to produce readiness and alertness of body and mind, and training in some or other of those many skills which are needed both in a mechanized army and in a mechanized industry. Let us then, we said, separate this non-military training which is as much for citizenship as pre-service training, put it under the education authorities and not under the forces, have a year's pre-citizenship or pre-service training before what might, in that case, be not more than six months' military training proper. Let us use all these camps and aerodromes and workshops which have been set up in country places, in the Highlands and Galloway and North Wales, and have a year of pre-citizenship training in camp boarding schools for all. These camp boarding schools should develop technical skills and provide the group of studies wanted for citizenship and that kind of training which is given by the Boy Scouts or is summed up in the County Badge scheme. This last training would take place in conditions peculiarly suited for it. We could find teachers from all the young men and women who have found in the army that they have gifts to lead and teach the young. The administrative problems which haunt reformers—how to find the buildings and the teachers for any great forward move—would be already largely solved.

This supplement began by saying that it was all important that boys and girls should arrive at their eighteenth birthday trained, fit in body and mind, equipped with skill, ready to play their part as active citizens. Could it be done better than by giving them *after* two years of a job a year of camp boarding schools for all in the surroundings of some of the existing camps?

Such was in outline the scheme which built itself up in our minds for fourteen to eighteen, for the majority, that is, who did not want full time secondary education after fifteen—school up to fifteen plus, industry and day continuation school up to seventeen, pre-citizenship or pre-service training in camp boarding schools from seventeen to eighteen.

Three questions were raised. Is this to apply to girls as well as to boys? The women members of our group unhesitatingly said, Yes. So that was that. Will the camps

then be co-educational? Provisional answer: Like schools, some will and some won't. What about secondary schools? The scholars must all come in, but we are not clear that they must all come in for a year. It is, in our opinion, of great importance that all boys and girls should share the same experience at that seventeen to eighteen age—much more important for democracy than a common school up to fourteen. But sixth form boys and girls might have only six

months. The group was not clear about this.

Religion? We hoped that the churches and the youth organizations would see a wonderful opportunity for real religious education—not propaganda—and seize it with both hands.

This scheme has been submitted to various groups of people concerned with education and on the whole met with approval. I hope the readers of the C.N.-L. will be interested in it.

NOTE ON THE GROUP MENTIONED IN THE SUPPLEMENT

The secretary of the group referred to in the Supplement has supplied the following information about it: "The group, which has quite an informal character, grew out of a meeting on 'education from 14-18,' which was organized by the readers of the C.N.-L. in Oxford last summer. A few of us thought that the lively discussion at that meeting ought to be continued. We proceeded on the 'Rotary' principle to collect as wide a variety of teachers as we could, keeping the numbers balanced between university and training colleges, secondary, elementary and other types of schools. In order to give the term 'education' the widest setting we included those who deal with boys and girls in their leisure (a parson and a youth organizer) and in their work (the local welfare officer). Our procedure was very simple. We frankly admitted that we knew very little about the day to day activities and problems of schools, other than the one in which we happened to teach, so our first half-dozen meetings consisted of fairly detailed accounts by our members of all the main types of schools. After that exchange

of facts we began to see something of the whole. We then got down to some of the chief problems which this exchange had raised in our minds—the scholarship system and its effect on child and teacher, the selection and training of teachers, the dual circuits of elementary school and training college, and secondary school and university, and the social results of their never intersecting. We had two psychologists in the group to remind us always of the effect of this and that on the child as a person. We invited specialists to come and tell us about interesting experiments such as the Rugby day continuation scheme. At each of three meetings we put up some of our suggestions to representatives from large industrial concerns and had them knocked about. But although we ranged far and wide we were continually driven back to the 14-18 question as the hard core of all our problems and to the conclusion that, if only some bold comprehensive policy could be found to turn these years to the best possible account, all other problems would become easier of solution."

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

AUGUST 26TH, 1942

THE FATE OF THE WESTERN WORLD

War puts a stopper for the most part on the international exchange of ideas; few books from the Continent reach this country in war-time. Professor Eberhard Grisebach of Zürich has just sent me his latest work, published this year, the subject of which is the fateful decision which confronts the Western World.¹ It will no doubt interest many readers of the Christian News-Letter to know what a Christian philosophical thinker on the Continent has to say about the present situation.

As is evident from his earlier work *Gegenwart*, published in 1928, Professor Grisebach has a strong distaste for speculative thinking. It is his passionate desire to live and think in the real world, which is for him, as for Martin Buber, the world of meeting, encounter, contradiction and conflict.

From this point onwards I shall leave Professor Grisebach to speak for himself. Compression must inevitably at many points do less than justice to his thought. Moreover, if he had written the Supplement himself, his selection of matter and emphasis would probably have been different from mine. But I shall do my best to convey the gist of his book, as largely as possible in his own words. It must not be assumed that I agree with everything he says—I am trying to express as objectively as possible his view, not my own. But, speaking generally, what he has to say about the predicament of Western society and the action that is called for seems to me of extreme importance and in the main commands my assent.

THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE

The question of acute concern to all of us is the question of the future. How are we to act in relation to the unknown future which is inevitably coming to us? How can we meet it with full moral responsibility? That is what is meant when we speak of the fate of the Western World.

Our concern with the future is not an interest in the predictions of soothsayers and clairvoyants. To draw aside the curtain in order to see how the play will develop is to adopt the rôle of spectators, just as much as when we seek escape from the responsibilities of actual life by dreaming about the past. Nor is it a matter of planning for the future; when we embrace an ideal, form a purpose, choose for ourselves the ends for which we shall strive, we still remain in the subjective sphere. It is the future in an objective sense that is our proper concern.

The objective future is an encounter, not with dumb nature, but with a man or with a group of men who directly contradict us. Our view of what is right is denied; our purpose is met with an unexpected challenge. When we are dealing with things we also encounter obstacles; but in this case they are obstacles which are not in principle insurmountable. A little more intelligence, a little greater strength, a little longer time might enable us to overcome them. But in the contradiction of a mind and will different from our own we are confronted by an irremovable obstacle, an absolute limit. We may, of course, destroy our opponent, but that is to treat him as a thing. All the ideas we have acquired through education or have inherited in our religious, national, professional or class tradition, may be called in question by the unexpected encounter.

There are, of course, endless devices by which we can evade the encounter. We can set ourselves to understand the other person or group, not in order to do justice to their claims, but in order to bring them within the scope of our own purpose. Psychology and anthropology can be used not as aids to a true meeting but as a means of preventing it. Shrewd politicians can quite successfully fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time. Or again, we can refuse to hear the challenge until it breaks

¹ *Die Schicksalsfrage des Abendlandes*. Verlag Paul Haupt. Berne.

out in tones that we cannot disregard. The cry of the workers passed unheeded until it convulsed the world in the Russian revolution. There is no way of eliminating such conflict from life, since it arises inevitably from the fact of difference.

From this understanding of real life as unending conflict between different standpoints, which are rooted in differences of locality, history and circumstances, two consequences follow. Negatively, we must abandon, once for all, the arrogant belief that the system, tradition or world-view to which we ourselves adhere embodies the whole of truth, and every domineering attempt to impose our own doctrine and way of life on others. Positively, we must accept with all its consequences the fact that the essential nature of human society is conversation or dialogue, a continuous attempt to adjust differences and readiness to listen to the other party. We must give far larger recognition than in the past to the fact that thinking, though it is carried out by individual minds, is a social and not an individual enterprise.

THE PREDICAMENT OF EUROPE

Our predicament arises from the fact that the validity of all that Europe has stood for in the past is now in question. This is obviously true externally. The intellectual and spiritual leadership of Europe is no longer acknowledged by other continents, as it has been in the past. And in Europe itself men are increasingly aware that the heritage of a common culture is disintegrating and giving place to an anarchy of competing world-views.

Our first task in this situation is to re-examine the spiritual foundations of European civilization, in order to see where and how they have proved inadequate, and whether they contain elements of enduring value which can serve us in the future.

THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE

The chief force which has given shape and direction to European civilization is the legacy from classical antiquity. For all its splendour, classical thought was infected at its root by a cardinal error. It took for granted that it had to deal with a closed world, the laws of which could be discovered, and the full meaning of which could be comprehended by reason. Consequently each system of thought, each expression of science and art, put forward the claim to universal

validity. The extent to which every thinker is conditioned in his thought by the place which he occupies in space and time was overlooked. Rational systems of thought seemed to offer a protection against the wild incalculable forces of the universe, the disturbance of chance and the consuming anxieties of real life. This illusory quest for security and finality has been the fundamental error which has led Europe astray. Its whole outlook has been shaped by the confidence that man by his own powers could make himself master of the universe.

Yet this is not the whole story. At the core of classical culture there was present a quite other element—an intuitive sense of measure and limitation, of the necessity of self-examination, self-criticism and self-discipline. This quality of candour, conscientiousness, uprightness, or whatever one may choose to call it, which found voice in Socrates, is an undercurrent running through all the creations of classical antiquity. Ancient culture lived on the edge of a volcano. No edifice or system of thought remained for long intact. Sooner or later it began to be undermined by the corroding influence of doubt. The *conscience* of antiquity allowed no claim to absolute or final truth to go for long unchallenged. The hidden spring was a passionate desire to know reality, to expose and get rid of self-deception. Europe was never able to remain deaf to the voice of Socrates. He incorporated the European conscience.

CHRISTIANITY

The confidence of the ancient world in man's ability to explore and solve the mysteries of nature and history by the natural light of reason was shattered by the unexpected advent of a new religion from the East. In Christianity classical culture encountered its fate. Everything it stood for was called in question when Christianity called man to repentance, and announced a way of redemption through the Cross that was wholly opposed to the self-reliant and heroic attitude of classical culture. The peace which passes understanding is in no way dependent on the wise and their wisdom.

The encounter of classical antiquity with Christianity is the collision of two worlds. The controversy continues without an end. It is the permanent crisis of Europe—the most radical crisis that can be conceived. Here the fate of man is most deeply involved. His pride in his knowledge and culture, his

confidence in his ability to work out his own salvation are fundamentally challenged.

The age which dawns in Christianity is so different from that of the world, and in particular of the classical world, not only in fundamental principle but in actual reality, that it cannot be brought into harmony with any of the conceptions of classical thinking. The Gospels transport us into a sphere in which selflessness instead of self-seeking, humility instead of resentment, are the springs of action. It is a world of expectancy, promise, suffering and obedience. There breaks upon us a disillusioning reality, which makes itself heard as a challenge, as a question of the future and of our destiny. The whole narrative and teaching in the Gospels reach their climax and find their meaning in the Cross.

The call to discipleship makes it plain that we have to do not with theories, but with something that happens to us. Christ on the Cross is the complete contradiction of our will to dominate. His death was the utmost conceivable manifestation and heightening of obedience to God, patience, humility, love to men, hope and faith in a promised future. Here a real, eternal situation of man is made manifest. It is not a question of our feelings or our inner experiences, but of something real and wholly unexpected that confronts us to-day just as directly as it did the disciples at Golgotha.

The revelation of the Cross is of a faith and trust obedient to the very end. It demands a decision which can be made only through faith and by suffering. The revelation in the Gospel can be understood only when we accept for ourselves the whole life of Jesus as a dying of the self and follow in the footsteps of His Passion. The meaning of the Resurrection is that Christ and His Word continue to live in the reality of a Christian fellowship united in love and suffering.

CONSCIENCE AND FAITH

We have seen that the great heritage from the classical world is an unresting conscience. The vital question for the future is whether Christian faith is compatible with this unrelenting search for truth. In other words, can we still be Christians without turning our backs on Socrates?

It is essential here to make a clear distinction between the central core of Christian faith and the theological and philosophical interpretations in which it has found expres-

sion. The latter are no more immune than secular systems of thought from the searching scrutiny of the critical, enquiring intellect. No more than other systems do they provide a shelter from the conflicts and contradictions of real life or furnish us with a means of mastering reality. Their universal and imperialistic pretensions are no less suspect than those of secular thought. No Christian philosophy, no Christian system of ethics, no Christian polity can offer itself as the final solution of the problems of society. The claim of a Christian humanism to provide a satisfying synthesis of reason and revelation must be decisively rejected.

But the essential core of the Christian faith lies in a different sphere from that in which the critical intellect operates. Conscience has nothing to say against the act of trust which is content to leave the future in the hands of God. It puts no obstacle in the way of our whole-hearted response to the demands of God and our neighbour, nor of our acknowledgement of, and surrender to, the reality which we encounter in the Gospels and in the living Christian community.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

What guidance for action may be deduced from this analysis of the situation?

We must make up our minds once for all that no single universal principle or system of ideas can comprehend the whole of reality. We must no longer suppose that we can anticipate or predetermine in thought what is going to happen. It is not for us to prescribe to God. Every system of thought in the nineteenth century tried in one form or another to bring God within the sphere of human reason. God became entangled in the play of wits and involved, as it were, in the luck of the game.

All building for the future must be based on the recognition that both thought and work are *social* enterprises. Both individualism and the claim to impose our view on the world at large must be finally renounced. All Robinson Crusoe monologues will become boring. Society alone is real. The problem of fellowship begins when different persons encounter one another. Speech is the cement which holds society together. Reality consists in the common labour and mutual support of those who are together involved in a common crisis.

The first step we have to take is to get into the game. We must stop building utopias in

our thought and fancy, and go out into the real world to meet an unknown and uncertain future. We have to think of ourselves not primarily as shapers of the future, but as those to whom something happens. The decisive thing is how we respond to what comes to us.

The place where we have to begin is where we are. Our home, our profession, our speciality define for us our obligations. Our home means, in the first place, our country, neighbourhood and tradition to which we owe our form and *style*; but in a deeper sense it means the human need that lies at our hand and demands our co-operation.

THE ATTITUDE TO WORK

If we are to build for the future, everything depends on our attitude to work. Work is the element in which the relations between men can most naturally and simply be regulated and clarified. We are concerned here not with the economic aspects of work, but with its ethical motives. The fact that the traditional motives have lost their compelling power is the cause of our present predicament.

The attitude of classical culture to work had three distinguishing characteristics. It was aristocratic, artistic, and athletic or combatant. The educated Greek or Roman thought of ordinary routine work as degrading and unfit for a free man. The only kind of working which he respected was the artist's activity, which he thought of as something masterful, imposing form and harmony, measure and reason on matter, which in itself is formless and disorderly. This activity was intensified by a love of competition. Rivalry was one of the decisive motives in the classical attitude to work.

Christianity brought a fundamental change. In early Christianity, what happens to us was felt to be more important than what we do. Work as a cultural achievement was no longer the chief concern. It was thought of primarily as a means of service to the community. The Christian virtues of humility, patience

and the love which endures all things took the place of the will to power. The primary concern of Christianity was not the beautiful form, but the substance and content—the Cross, suffering, the endurance of wrongs. The place of restless activity was taken by a manly patience, which it was hard for Greeks and Romans to understand.

The Christian humanism of the nineteenth century attempted to combine the pride of classical culture with Christian devotion. The dominant motive was the idea of the creative spirit or reason expressing itself in the cultivated personality, and establishing dominion over the world by its spontaneous labour. The temper of antiquity triumphed, and Christianity receded into the background. Man, in virtue of his power to know and to create, confidently assumed the central place in a world of truth, beauty and goodness, with which presumably God was well-pleased. Work was the participation of man in the divine task of creation. Thinkers, poets, musicians, scientists, technicians were all fulfilling the tasks which the eternal Reason had assigned to the genius of Europe.

But the irresponsibility and purposelessness of these romantic dreams have become increasingly apparent. It is plain that we have somehow lost touch with reality. Everywhere there is restless haste and feverish activity, accompanied by a progressive loss of meaning.

The reality of work is found in the human relations to which it contributes. These relations in work are the real substance of every society. Work in Europe, in spite of all its technical achievements, has failed to create a true society. Work is meaningless when it is performed only for the satisfaction of the worker; it is meaningless unless it is a response to a social demand. Only within the experienced reality of human fellowship are the fundamental driving forces of faith, conscience and passion for the real free to operate.

J. H. O.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

SEPTEMBER 9TH, 1942

STOCK-TAKING IN THEOLOGY

By A. R. VIDLER

The Oxford English Dictionary defines theology as "the study or science which treats of God, His nature and attributes, and His relations with man and the universe." We may supplement this definition with some words of P. T. Forsyth, whom I look upon as the greatest English theologian of the last generation. "The work done by theologians," he said, "is not done for a small group of people with an interest in that hobby. It is not sectional work at all. It is first done for the preachers and their preaching, and through them for the public, on the question of most universal moment."

THE RECOVERY OF THEOLOGY

If that is so, how has it come about that theology has the reputation of being a dry and academic subject, and clergymen, who have sought and won the popular ear, have been known to flatter themselves that they were *not* theologians? One reason is that in the modern period actual theological work has become more and more sectional; it has been concerned with those sections of human history and experience which are called "religious," and has, therefore, appealed only to those people who had an interest in some aspect of religion. But it should be observed that there is no mention of "religion" in our definition of theology (and it may be noted that the word "religion" very seldom occurs in the Bible). Theology is "the study or science which treats of God . . . and His relations with man and the universe"; that does not sound like a sectional subject. It sounds total or universal.

This does not mean, however, that theology is the general study of everything in contrast to the specialized sciences, each of which selects a section of reality for its subject-matter. What distinguishes theology from

philosophy and from the study of religion or the other sciences, which are man's attempts to understand and master reality or part of it, is its fundamental assumption that God, who is the ground and source of all reality, has approached man, understood and mastered man, revealed Himself in an Act by which the world has been redeemed. Theology is the study of this Act of God in all its bearings, and its method is prescribed by God's way of approaching and meeting us, which is the way of personal encounter.

Recent stock-taking has disclosed how far theology had been going astray for a century or more, both through regarding "religion" as its subject-matter, and through limiting itself to methods of study which are appropriate in other sciences, but which are incapable of dealing with personal relationships and, in particular, with God's revelation of Himself. At the same time a growing number of people, whose outlook can be broadly described as that of "scientific humanism," have begun to wonder whether there are not ultimate elements in reality which that outlook prevented them from attending to. And some of them are turning hopefully to theologians with the request that they should give an account of what is to be seen from their outlook.

For twenty years or so a movement of recovery—both as to subject-matter and methods of study—has been at work in continental and British theology, but it is still only in its early stages. Theologians do not yet find it easy to convince the public, or perhaps even themselves, that it is their business to deal with "the question of most universal moment." It is indeed difficult for theologians to get on speaking terms with typically modern minds, if by speaking terms we mean that each party to the conversation should understand what the other is talking about.

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

This is not due merely to the fact that many of the words used in theology are unfamiliar nowadays or that they have an archaic flavour; a more serious obstacle to communication is that many theological words—from the word “God” downwards—are familiar, but either have had their authentic meaning drained out of them, and some other meaning attached to them, or have ceased to bear any definite meaning or to arouse any definite response whatever.

Theologians are often reproached for using unintelligible language or meaningless jargon, or for being needlessly obscure. I admit that the reproach is sometimes justified, most of all (I should say) in the case of speakers and writers who are not aware of the difference between the original meaning of theological words and their meaning in current usage. For that is the real problem, and also the real answer to those who clamour for theology to be expressed simply, in popular language, so as to be understood at once by the ordinary man. If theology is to convey anything to us that we do not know already, it must be granted the use of a distinctive language; people who are in earnest will expect to have to learn it. (People who take politics seriously, e.g. Marxists, have to learn a new language; unwillingness to do so in the case of theology implies a lack of really serious interest.)

Where does theology get its language from? The answer is: From the Bible. Whenever theologians set about a thorough stock-taking, they come up against the fact that their primary stock-in-trade is the Bible. They have accumulated a great many subsidiary wares in the course of the centuries—from various philosophical systems, from the intercourse of the Christian faith with the different societies in which it has been established, from the impact upon it of the specialized sciences. But as a distinct enterprise Christian theology stands or falls with the Bible, so that Hugh of St. Victor could well say: *Theologia, id est divina scriptura*.

THEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

The Bible, therefore, is the text-book not only of theological professors, but for all who mean to study theology. Theology starts with the assumption that the Bible is the permanent and final witness to the Being and Nature of God, to the manner of His relations

with man and the world, as He has Himself disclosed them through His dealings with the People whose history is recorded and interpreted there. This does not, of course, mean that the Bible is a collection of infallible oracles (that is the error known as “Fundamentalism”); but equally it rules out the notion that the Bible is adequately regarded as the most remarkable book about religion that mankind has so far produced (that attitude was at the back of a great deal of what is now called “liberal” or “modernist” Christianity). The Bible is a book not about religion, but about God and His dealings with men in the whole of their social as well as their individual life. Above all, it is the book about God’s Act in Jesus Christ, by which and in whom He has saved mankind from sin and death and turned the tragedy of human history into the glory of eternal life.

Thus the task of theology is to be defined as the study of this Act of God in its full range and implications. “We are in a world which has been redeemed; and not in one which is being redeemed at a pace varying with the world’s thought and progress, or the Churches’ thought and work” (Forsyth). The world’s thought and progress, and the Churches’ thought and work, have to be judged and tested, illuminated and corrected, by being brought to the place where God has once for all acted and spoken in Jesus Christ. This is the proper work of theologians, and it is work in which all Christian people must take part according to their opportunities.

It must be confessed that, of the vast number of “religious” books that are published, comparatively few help to set forward this work either by making us think fresh thoughts about it or by breaking through the crust of conventional or popular beliefs. The present theological reaction or revival is having the effect of recalling theologians to their proper work, namely to a systematic study of the Bible, and of the way in which God’s unveiling of Himself in that area of man’s history provides the clue to His relations with mankind always, and in particular with us in the bit of history in which it is our destiny to live and die.

BOOKS ABOUT THE BIBLE

It has been suggested that I should specify some books, published in recent years, that are significant of the direction in which theology is now moving. In the space avail-

able I must limit myself to books which have a more or less direct reference to the Bible, but a more complete stock-taking would deal also with the spreading rediscovery of the Fathers (esp. St. Augustine), of the Scholastics (esp. St. Thomas Aquinas), of the Reformers (esp. Luther and Calvin), and also of the Liturgies of Christendom. All these indeed point back to the Bible, and the renewed interest in them is significant of the same theological recovery.

It is generally known that during the nineteenth century there was a vast expenditure of energy on the historical and literary criticism of the books of the Bible. Although some of the theories propounded (by the orthodox as well as by the heterodox) were perverse and fantastic, the result has been to vindicate the value and indeed the necessity of that way of studying the documents. The trouble was, however, that a great deal of so-called theological study never got beyond that absorbing, but preliminary, task. Mr. C. S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*¹ has a shrewd hit at this when he writes:—

"The Historical Point of View, put briefly, means that when a learned man is presented with any statement in an ancient author, the one question he never asks is whether it is true. He asks who influenced the ancient writer, and how far the statement is consistent with what he said in other books, and what phase in the writer's development, or in the general history of thought, it illustrates, and how it affected later writers, and how often it has been misunderstood (specially by the learned man's own colleagues), and what the general course of criticism on it has been for the last ten years, and what is the 'present state of the question.'"

Much of what goes under the name of theological study in our universities to-day does not get much farther than that. But there is now a growing and welcome insistence that study of the Bible does not become fully theological until it asks what are the themes that run through the whole Biblical story and that gives it its coherence, until it quickens the imagination of the student into an under-

standing of how God was meeting men—not only as individuals, but as His people (i.e. in Community)—in the typical area of history which the Bible records, and finally until it opens his eyes to see how in similar ways the God to Whom the Bible bears witness is meeting us to-day—again not only as individuals, but as His people (the Church).

A book which focussed attention on this way of approaching the New Testament was published in 1931—*The Riddle of the New Testament* by the late Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and Noel Davey (Faber, 8/6); the writers showed that critical study of the New Testament, so far from solving the problems that it raises, actually forces upon us a theological decision as to whether the affirmations of the Christian Creed are true. Together with this book there should be read Prof. C. H. Dodd's *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1936, 5/-) and *History and the Gospel* * (Nisbet, 1938, 6/-), Dr. F. W. Camfield's *Revelation and the Holy Spirit* * (Elliot Stock, 1933, 8/6) and Sir Edwyn Hoskyns' *Cambridge Sermons* (S.P.C.K., 1938, 6/-) which drive home the same point. The last is important, because it brings out the essential unfamiliarity of the New Testament language to the modern mind. A book that does this in more detail for a key set of words—"forgiveness," "justification," "reconciliation," "fellowship" and "sanctification"—is Dr. Vincent Taylor's *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: a study in New Testament Theology* * (Macmillan, 1941, 10/6). The reader of these and other books should read them with the Bible itself at his elbow, and look up the biblical references which they contain, so that he can see for-himself how much light they throw on the original meaning of the Book.

We badly need similar books which will help us to get an insight into the fundamental themes of the Old Testament. Fr. A. G. Hebert's *The Throne of David* * (Faber, 1941, 12/6) is a serviceable essay in this direction. We also need fresh commentaries on the separate books of the Bible, which take into account all the work that has been done

¹ It must be thankfully acknowledged that laymen, like Mr. Lewis, are being much more successful than professional theologians in "getting theology across" to the interested lay public. Many readers may find that, at any rate to begin with, they get more out of books such as Mr. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* (Geoffrey Bles, 1942, 5/-) and *The Problem of Pain* (Centenary Press, 1940, 3/6), or Mr. Charles Williams' *He came down from Heaven* (Heinemann, 1938, 5/-) and *The Descent of the Dove* (Longmans, 1939, 8/6) or Miss Dorothy Sayers' *The Mind of the Maker* (Methuen, 1941, 6/-), or the just published *Midnight Hour* by "Nicodemus" (Faber, 1942, 8/6), than from the books by professional theologians that are recommended here. Not only do they whet the appetite for solid fare, but they provide it.

* The books marked with an asterisk are rather more technical than the others, and so will be stiffer reading.

by the critics, and at the same time bring out both what the book as a whole affirms to be true and what is the precise force of its key words. A good example of this is Mr. F. C. Synge's *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: a theological commentary** (S.P.C.K., 1941, 3/6).

Rediscovering the Bible, by Mlle. Suzanne de Dietrich (Moel Llys, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester, 2/2 post free), which has just been published, shows how during the last ten years there has been an eager return to Bible study in S.C.M. branches all over the world, and it is full of wise suggestions for future work by individuals and groups.

For a hundred years or more the question of miracles has been hotly debated, and one would have thought that everything that could be said about it had already been said. Let anyone who imagines that to be the case read Mr. Alan Richardson's *The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels** (S.C.M. Press, 1941, 6/-). He uses the instruments of criticism, but shows that a purely "historical" or "scientific" approach to the subject misses or distorts the theological assertion that the miracles of Jesus were signs or evidence that "the powers of the Age to Come" were already at work in the world for those who exercised faith.

SOME OTHER BOOKS

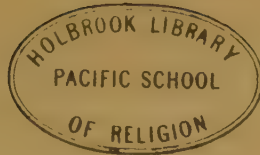
It would be interesting to go on and see how books, not dealing so directly with the Bible, are nevertheless inspired by the same serious and urgent determination to accept the themes of the Bible itself as the ground on which the Christian must tackle all contemporary issues, whether "religious" or "secular." I can give here no more than a few instances. Dr. J. S. Whale's *Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1941, 7/6) is a brilliant exposition of the Christian faith, which was designed for university students in the first place, but which has already found a much wider public. Heinrich Vogel, a German Confessional pastor, in *The Iron Ration of a Christian* (S.C.M., 1941, 6/-) shows how a thoroughly biblical theology enables a

preacher to deliver his message with an exciting directness; this should be read alongside Dr. Herbert Farmer's *The Servant of the Word** (Nisbet, 1941, 6/-) which among other things applies to the preacher's task the insight that is to be derived from Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, to which attention has lately been called in the C.N.L. This is a book for laymen as well as preachers, though for the latter especially. Mr. D. R. Davies in *Secular Illusion or Christian Realism?* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1942, 4/6) and in *Down Peacock's Feathers* (Centenary Press, 1941, 5/-) shows how a faith which springs out of the Bible casts fresh light, both lurid and dazzling, on the whole field of modern politics and sociology. Mr. Daniel T. Jenkins in *The Nature of Catholicity** (Faber, 1942, 5/-) shows how a theology that takes the Bible seriously, puts the problems of Church Order and Reunion on a different plane from that on which they are commonly discussed. This should be read in conjunction with Canon A. M. Ramsey's *The Gospel and the Catholic Church** (Longmans, 1936, 7/6). Last but not least, those who have read Dr. Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World* (Edinburgh House Press, 1938, 8/6) will see how that bears upon what I have been saying; it was rightly felt to challenge most current attitudes to the world-wide missionary task of the Church.

No one could say that he entirely agrees with all these books, since they are by no means unanimous. But I believe that they fairly represent growing points in recent theological work, and that they are all signs of promise. They are the kind of books to be read by those who want to find out in what direction theological study is now moving and what has been the outcome of ten years' stock-taking. We seem to be at the beginning as well as at the end of a theological period; though in a deeper sense theology is always at the beginning of its work, for as Prof. Karl Barth has said, "There can be no completed work. All human achievements are no more than *Prolegomena*; and this is especially the case in the field of theology."

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



THE PROFIT MOTIVE IN INDUSTRY

By BASIL SMALLPEICE

In mid-July the Minister of Labour and National Service, Mr. Bevin, was reported by *The Times* as saying that "he did not believe that profit would be the great motive after the war." This spark proved sufficient to kindle a lively fire out of the dry tinder of controversy; and it was then suggested to me that it might interest readers of *The Christian News-Letter* if a supplement were written on the subject by an industrial accountant. As such, I am so placed inside industry as to be able to observe, as I also take part in, the day-to-day processes of industrial management and administration, and, therefore, to make some attempt at assessing the importance of the different factors taken into account in reaching decisions. But I am not an industrialist; nor do I claim to represent his point of view.

It is very difficult to approach this problem without bias; yet, if we are to consider it dispassionately and intelligently, we must clear our minds of prejudice as well as misconception. It seems to me to be necessary to start by attempting to define the function of industry in society. We can, I think, take as a working hypothesis that industry is, or ought to be, the means of enabling society to provide itself with the material requirements of modern life. In the sense in which I use the word, industry implies much more than manufacture: it embraces the whole field of economic enterprise. In each unit of industry, whether farm, factory, bank or shop, men and women work together to produce some goods or render some service useful to and wanted by the rest of the community. Thus, in fulfilling its proper function, which is the production of goods and services, industry also provides the setting—and for most of us living in the twentieth century it is the only setting apart from our homes—in which we can make our unique and individual contribution to the general well-being of the community.

THE PERSONAL INCENTIVE

It is necessary, too, to be clear about what is meant by the profit motive. Applied to the individual in industry, it is a personal incentive; it is local in its effect, and can be used to stimulate a man's efforts in any given direction. As usually understood, it takes the form of private profit as the reward for individual enterprise. But it may also be applied in the form of piece rates to encourage production (of useful or useless articles), in the form of commission to stimulate sales (of wanted or of unwanted goods), in the form of a bonus, based on, say, the absence of complaints in the territory for which a manager is responsible, to encourage good service to the public, in the form of patent royalties to stimulate inventions, and in countless other ways.

THE PROFIT RULE

But the profit motive applied to industry—and that is what I am writing about in this Supplement, though "motive" may not be quite the right word to describe it—is a different thing altogether. It is independent of the personal incentive. It is, in fact, not so much an incentive as a directive. If, in fulfilling its function in society, a business is made to understand that its primary object is to make profits, and the more the better, and if society not only makes the earning of profit a measure of success but also makes the avoidance of loss a condition of survival, then it means that in that business almost every decision having financial implications must be reached primarily by reference to the question of profitability. Nor is the effect merely local; for as with the single business, so with the whole of industry.

Of course, I know that in practice many people do tend to modify the absolute rule of profitability for social, or humanitarian, or even Christian reasons. They do not stop to calculate the financial effect of every action.

Even at considerable cost to themselves, people keep their word in business and recognize obligations to employees and their dependants. But the freedom to modify or disregard profitability is strictly limited. Generally speaking, it is only the private owner of a business who is free to make no profit if he wishes, or to meet moral obligations out of his own pocket if he prefers; and the private owner of a business is already becoming the exception rather than the rule.

ITS IMPERSONAL GRIP

It is very different in a company or corporation, which society has endowed with a personality independent of those who take part in its work—a body without a soul, having neither generosity nor compassion, except in so far as those qualities are imposed upon it by its executives. But, even so, the executive who seeks to follow the dictates of his conscience is always open to the reproach that he is handling other people's money, which he cannot deal with as he would his own. He must not, he is told, spend that money unproductively: every decision of his that has financial consequences must be justified by the expectation of profit or the avoidance of loss.

This does not apply only at the highest level of authority. It runs right down through every level at which decisions are taken in industry, from the general manager to the foreman and section head. In fact, the lower the level at which the decision is reached, the stricter must be the adherence to the "profit rule" (which is a better phrase to use in this connection, being more exact and less susceptible to misinterpretation than "profit motive"). The senior executives more nearly approach the position formerly occupied by the private owner and are freer, within limits and on occasions, to use their discretion and disregard profitability. But at the lower levels of authority, foremen and managers waive the profit rule at their peril—perhaps necessarily so, for otherwise there would be chaos.

THE RULE UNAFFECTED BY OWNERSHIP

It is of great importance to bear in mind this distinction between the profit rule in industry and the monetary incentive for the individual. I want to emphasize this distinc-

tion particularly, because we are not considering here whether it is good or bad that this or that class of people should make money out of industry in this or that form. What we are considering is the effect on society of the impact of the profit rule, as a directive force, on industry. To change the ownership of industry will not necessarily alter that rule: nor will any juggling with the division of profit between employees and shareholders through co-partnership schemes, desirable though that may be on other grounds. So long as the profit rule occupies its present predominant position—that is to say, so long as decisions are based primarily on considerations of financial profitability—the effect on society will be the same, whether industry is privately owned or state owned.¹

Now, in the profit rule we have at hand, as a guide in making decisions, a rough and ready rule of thumb which is both convenient in use and readily understandable by even the meanest intelligence. And there are two questions I want to try to answer: the first, which is in the sphere of economics, is whether this rule of thumb helps or hinders industry in fulfilling its function in society; and the second, which is in the sphere of ethics, is whether it is in harmony or in conflict with profession of the Christian faith.

ECONOMIC SHORTCOMINGS

In the economic sphere, I think there can be little doubt that, if industry is left to make its own decisions on the basis of what appears to its separate units to pay better in terms of £ s. d., it cannot, in present circumstances, satisfactorily provide the whole community with the necessities and frills of modern life. The chief reason is that, on the profit rule, it often pays industry better to restrict output, producing less than the community really needs, in order that prices may be kept higher than would otherwise be the case: in some cases, even, that may be the only way of avoiding losses and eventual bankruptcy. Further, the profit rule encourages the short view, and, on a short view, it often pays a group of people better to stimulate a fresh and artificial demand than to show initiative in meeting a real need. Again, it often pays industrialists better to buy up new inventions in order to suppress them, or to take out blocking patents "with the deliberate intention of preventing others from trying out new and

¹ See reports on Soviet industry by Mr. Joseph E. Davies, the American Ambassador, in his book *Mission to Moscow*. (Gollancz, 15/-.)

improved methods which may render their own methods obsolete.”¹

Nor does industry, acting in response to the profit rule; seem able to provide each one of us with the opportunity of fruitful employment. As evidence, there is the record of the twenty years between the wars, when, on average, one in every seven of our insured workers was out of work. Given the fact of people with willing hands in idleness, yet we could not make room for them to contribute their share of effort to the general well-being because it paid industry better to employ 85 per cent of the people for full time rather than to employ everybody for a proportionately shorter time—for to have employed the remaining 15 per cent would have involved industry in “unprofitable” expenditure in helping them to move and training them for new and unaccustomed work, or in providing them with suitable work within reach. So some two million people were kept in enforced idleness, unemployed against their will, while the rest of the community worked harder and longer than necessary.

POSSIBLE REMEDIES

I know that in these last two paragraphs I have been sweeping and unprecise. But to be otherwise would need the writing of a book; and when I pass on to consider what remedies might be applied to correct these failings, I can only sketch in very broad outline some rough ideas of how progress might be made. First of all, however, let us consider whether the profit rule could be abandoned altogether. We must not forget that the profit rule has proved a remarkably convenient way of controlling the devolution of responsibility and of producing automatic decisions at every level of the industrial hierarchy. Now, I cannot state the alternative, unless it be some form of totalitarianism; and I cannot, therefore, take the responsibility of saying that we must of necessity discard a tool which, after all, serves many useful purposes. We often hear it said that after the war we must substitute for the profit motive the motive of service to the community. Yes, but let us not confuse the issue. Such a substitution lies in the realm of personal incentives; it would not necessarily dispense with the profit rule. There must still be a criterion of social desirability.

Perhaps the best method of dealing with the profit rule is to erect round it a system of

checks and balances, so that it leads industry to produce the goods and render the services that society really requires. For this purpose there are many implements already at our disposal, and others could be improvised. Taxation, for example, need not be at a uniform rate throughout the whole of industry; it could be so varied as to encourage certain types of activity and take all the profit out of others. Development Boards might control the use of inventions, so that, if the tide of scientific progress had to be held in check, it would be kept back in the public interest, and not in the interest of a few individuals who did not want to “spoil a good thing.” Minimum wage regulations coupled with reasonable security of employment might help to prevent the exploitation of labour for profit.

SOCIAL COSTS AND GAINS IGNORED

Perhaps the profit rule itself could be modified by altering or extending the area within which it operates. At present, the determination of profit is restricted to the limits of a single firm or business. Yet it is obvious that what is profitable to an individual company may not be profitable to the community; and vice versa. There are social costs and gains which the single company does not and cannot take into account. For example, the cost to a company of employing a man who is unemployed is the full cost of his wages, and possibly a course of training; the cost to society is negligible, for society must feed, house and clothe the man in any event. It may be highly profitable to a company to employ people in filthy and unhealthy surroundings, leaving society to bear the cost of the medical service and attention which will prove necessary.

As an industrial accountant, I feel conscious of sharing with others in industry a great responsibility for developing new techniques of measurement and analysis which will somehow or other take into account these outside costs and gains, and so enable the profit rule to encourage and not stifle the growth and maintenance of socially desirable activities—if, indeed, these matters are capable of measurement in money values at all. With that qualification in mind, it behoves all of us, who have to do with figures, to realize and accept their essential limitations; and, if we are to serve humanity well, to remember what we so often forget, that our accounting and economic techniques are no more than

¹ Mr. Samuel Courtauld in *Government and Industry—their future relations*. (Macmillan, 6d.)

tools to be used with discrimination, not masters to be followed in slavish obedience.

THE ETHICAL PROBLEM

Outside the sphere of economics, an insidious result of the profit rule is the growth of social and personal irresponsibility. As one of those who saw the original draft of this supplement said: "We are most of us bone lazy, and all of us anxious to avoid responsibility; and the rule is the neatest device yet invented for avoiding responsibility." If we so choose, we do not have to worry whether our proposed action is right or wrong in itself, or whether it will hurt anyone else. All we have to do is to work out the figures—and if it seems likely to pay, we do it; if not, we don't. As to the consequences for other people, modern life is so complicated that they are generally out of sight, and, therefore, out of mind. Now, this notion that the individual is not responsible for the effect of his actions on other people is not by any means confined to those of us who are active in industrial management. You and I, as private persons, consume the products of industry. Our individual choices may appear quite insignificant by themselves, but, taken collectively, they ultimately determine what is or is not profitable. Yet we seldom realize either our responsibility or our inchoate power.

Another result of the profit rule is that it produces for society a set of completely false values. It begets the habit of judging the worth of things in terms of money. This attitude of mind, so easy to acquire because it seems to avoid the necessity for

serious thought, tends to spread down through every level of industry and out from industry through the whole structure of society. Thus, throughout a large section of the community, we have ceased to decide what to do or what not to do by reference either to Christian principles or to our conception of right and wrong, and have set up instead an entirely arbitrary rule of behaviour. We have, in fact, turned to worship of the golden calf.

In industry itself, the profit rule tends to frustrate the best in human nature, and is in direct conflict with the concept of work as a divine vocation. Further, through the opposition of interests which it inevitably produces between employers and employed, it is a bar to true fellowship, making people think selfishly instead of in terms of neighbourliness: thus, by setting man against man, it prevents the application to a large sphere of life of the second of the two Christian commandments.

If that is so, can Christians remain indifferent? Are not the effects of the profit rule, as it actually works out at present, of so disquieting a nature that the Christian conscience must be troubled by them? But, while I am unable to offer a complete solution, I have carried the analysis thus far, because it seems to me that the first necessity is to show clearly that there is evil here to be fought and overcome. Once people are sufficiently alive to the evils of the profit rule, perhaps they will then set themselves to limit those evils, and compensate for them at every possible point through a greater concern for moral and spiritual values.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

OCTOBER 7TH, 1942

THE CHRISTIAN FRONTIER

There is small reference to Christian standards in the general framework within which the work of the modern world is carried on and by which the conduct of its affairs is largely determined. In some countries they have been contemptuously repudiated; in others they have been relegated, like the British House of Lords, to a dignified but mainly ornamental rôle. At the same time, the world has more and more obviously been heading for disaster, and even in unexpected quarters there is a growing suspicion that these two facts are closely connected. Meanwhile, new gospels are offering new standards, and, however repellent these may be, they give their adherents immense stimulus and a clear direction for action. There is at this moment urgent need for an effective Christian alternative, but so far it has not been forthcoming. To the outsider the pronouncements of the Church have seemed to be remote and irrelevant generalities; and even in the lives of most Christians there has been a great gulf fixed between the Sunday world of Church and the week-day world of factory or office, mine or farm, Stock Exchange or House of Commons, with its very different governing assumptions. Thus there is an impasse. On the one hand, the world stands desperately in need of the social message of the Christian Church, if only it could make out what that is. On the other hand, the work of the Church is largely stultified because it seems unable to express its message either to outsiders or to its own members in terms of contemporary issues, and so it cannot be an effective force in large tracts of their lives. If this is to be redressed new bridges must be built between the worshipping Church and the working world.

In the period between the wars the Churches have become increasingly alive to this situation. They have bestirred themselves to reach a new understanding of their own Gospel in its application to contemporary life and to public affairs. Two World Conferences, Stockholm in 1925 and Oxford in 1937, have been culminating points in this effort. After the Oxford Conference two

bodies were set up in this country to carry on different parts of its work, and it has now proved possible to combine them with each other and with the British section of the World Conference on Faith and Order in a single British Council of Churches. This Council is composed of representatives of all the principal Christian Churches in this country (except the Roman Catholic Church), and of the various inter-denominational Christian organizations. It will be the Churches' agent in all those tasks which they can do better together than separately, and through it they will make their direct contribution in the social and international field. Co-operation with the Roman Catholics is provided for by the establishment of a Joint Standing Committee representing the Religion and Life Movement and the Sword of the Spirit.

FORMATION AND RAISON D'ÊTRE

In setting up the Council of Churches it was recognized that its work would need to be supplemented by another body of a freer and less official character. When it is desired to bridge over a chasm or to tunnel under a hill it is usual to start from both ends at once. The Council of Churches, consisting mainly of Church leaders and officers, starts naturally from the side of institutional religion. It asks, what does the fundamental Christian message, of which the Churches are the custodians, entail for the conduct of social life, and how is it to be applied to the affairs of the complicated world of to-day? But there is need also of a body tunnelling, as it were, from the other end, and consisting of persons who, while having a Christian outlook, are themselves mainly engaged in practical affairs. Such persons hold responsible positions in politics, commerce, industry, the labour world, education, etc. They know these fields from the inside and are in close touch with what is actually going on there. They know at first hand by what kind of considerations crucial decisions are determined, they are in close touch with those who make such decisions and have themselves some

share in the making of them. They are familiar with the practical difficulties and can contribute an element of realism. Thus they have special qualifications for investigating, partly by the method of trial and error, what difference their being Christians can and should make to the nature of these decisions.

There are two special reasons for the creation of such a body at the present time:—

(1) The war has enormously accelerated the pace of events. Whatever may be its course, few people doubt that far-reaching changes will follow it. But it is easy to overlook the important fact that, under the surface, fundamental social changes, e.g. in the structure of industry or education, with vast possibilities for good or for evil, may be taking place already; just as the watcher on the shore, seeing each wave as it comes, may overlook the setting of the tide. While idealists are considering blue prints for the future, that future may in substance have been already determined. It is vitally important to assess from a Christian standpoint what is now happening, so that Christian opinion may realize before it is too late which tendencies are to be welcomed and furthered and which must at all costs be withstood. For this purpose persons are required who in each field have the requisite knowledge and contacts.

(2) The second reason arises from the fact that the divergence between the doctrine which the Church proclaims and the actual practice of contemporary society is so acute that the things which Christian language tries to express have to many people become quite unreal. When that happens, when words have become depreciated in meaning, things cannot be put right by words alone. The pulpit is at a disadvantage because the words which are its tools have become blunted. The only way in which words used in the pulpit can regain their depth and power and richness of meaning is that they should be illustrated and reinforced by Christian action. A change has to be brought about in fundamental attitudes of mind and modes of behaviour, and the only way in which it can be effected is to change both the ideas in people's minds and also their practice. Both processes must go on simultaneously. You cannot wait to change people's practice until you have first changed their ideas; for if you do so you never will change their ideas. Of course, much of this transformation of habitual behaviour is the direct concern of the Churches, but many of the practical activities

which need to be changed have no obvious or immediate religious reference, though they do, in fact, presuppose a perverted or restricted view of the purpose of human life. Many social movements, though they seem on the surface to have a purely secular character, may actually be contributing in important ways to the growth of a common Christian society, or, on the other hand, may be working in the opposite direction. Hence there is special scope for a body consisting of persons whose own experience and responsibility are in the field of social action and experiment.

The formation of a new Council with a lay membership, to be known as the Council of the Christian Frontier, has therefore been cordially approved by the Council of Churches. It will work in close liaison with the Council of Churches, but will not be appointed by it nor be directly responsible to it. The name of the Christian Frontier has been chosen because the particular tasks with which the new Council will concern itself are those which lie on the borderland between the normal work of the Churches and the general life of society. Its membership is not yet complete, but it includes persons actively employed in public life, industry, labour organization, education and other spheres of similar activity. Its whole-time officers are Dr. J. H. Oldham and the Rev. F. C. Maxwell, and it has accepted responsibility for the publication of the *Christian News-Letter*.

BASIS.

The new Council has defined its functions as follows:—

(1) To create opportunities outside the sphere of organized religion for the discussion of Christian beliefs, standards and practice, and their application to current problems;

(2) To examine the nature of the forces working in modern society (i.e. in administration, industry, education, etc.), and to endeavour to direct them towards a more Christian order;

(3) To understand the efforts being made by various groups to influence these forces, and to co-operate with those of their activities which are contributing towards Christian ends.

In each of these the key word is "Christian," and it is important to be clear what it means in this context. Here the emphasis is *practical* and the question is, what practical difference does our being Christians make to our understanding of the problems of actual contemporary life and to our attitude and action in regard to them.

One of the most important facts in the world to-day is the fact of Russia. Those who direct the destinies of the Russian people and who control their education have a quite definite view about man and his relation to the world, and all their policy and methods are determined by that view. It is their assumption that men are capable of mastering the material forces which are the ultimate reality, and of directing them so that they will serve human purposes; that man is thus the source of all values and the architect of his own destiny. But since the Renaissance something very similar has been the working belief of much of the western world. Thus some of our scientists with social sympathies seem to look forward to "a world made perfect by technology." A good deal, too, which is said by our leaders on both sides of the Atlantic seems to boil down to this: "there must be a better order of society, and we Anglo-Americans mean to create it—we know how and we are going to do it."

But in our belief this widely accepted assumption is simply untrue; and because it is fantasy, a programme based on it can only lead to disaster. Against this we set the precisely contrary Christian faith, that man is fundamentally a dependent being, dependent both on his fellow-men and on God. Against all egotism and claim to domination, whether of the individual or of the group, the Christian recognizes the inexorable claim on him of God and neighbour. For him all "liquidation" or exploitation, all refusal of ordinary human rights to particular classes or races, whether Jews, Negroes, Poles or Germans, however inconvenient or obnoxious they may appear, is absolutely barred. So again, in education, it is not enough to equip boys and girls with the techniques which enable them to master their environment; they have to learn and to practise the obligations and responsibilities that belong to living as members of a community. Further, the Christian recognizes that he needs to look away from himself, not only outward but upward; that his task is not to initiate but to respond to a power that is greater and better than he; not to impose his own or his group's will, but to discover and to conform to the will of God, whose succour and guidance he needs at every turn. His attitude is *not* "man is the measure of all things," but "what is man that Thou art mindful of him?" To this basic attitude all Christians are committed, and at point after point it should lead them to social action radically

divergent from the action of those who do not share it.

The issue here is one, not of likings or of ideals, but of fact, for whether we cultivate or ignore or exploit them, God and neighbour are *there*. You can ignore them for the moment, but only in the mode and with the futility of the ostrich. The world of the fool who says in his heart "there is no God" is not the real world, but the world of fantasy; only here the fantasy consists in mistaking not fiction for fact, but fact for fiction. All the plans and hopes that are built on this mistaken assumption are bound to go awry. Man can no more achieve his purposes by ignoring the fundamental truth of his own being than he can maintain his health if he violates the laws of nature. Defeat and frustration are as inevitable in the one case as in the other. A right relation with God and neighbour is indispensable to health and, in the long run, to sanity.

PROCEDURE

In carrying out the functions defined above the Council of the Frontier has no intention of bringing into existence a new organization with branches bearing its label up and down the country. Its aim is to supplement and to assist the work of existing groups and bodies and not to compete with any of them. What is needed to-day is to provide the means of linking up more closely what is already going on. Hence one main purpose of the Council is to provide opportunities for the pooling of experience by individuals or groups, so that they can act more effectively in the sphere of their own personal responsibilities. The Council will endeavour to make contact with those in various localities throughout the country who are interested in its aims.

The members of the Council are already active in various directions. Those concerned with a particular field meet, sometimes as two or three who have a meal together, sometimes for an evening as a somewhat larger party including other persons with special qualifications, but always with the object of producing results which will rouse respect through their quality. They are at present dealing on these lines with the following subjects, since, out of a number which they might discuss, these seem the most immediately urgent:—

- (a) The needs of youth.
- (b) Problems of local communities.
- (c) The public attitude to politics.
- (d) Human relations in industry.
- (e) Problems of business management.

- (f) The planning of industry.
- (g) The profit motive.

From the work of the last of these there has already emerged a paper which has been published as a Supplement to the Christian News-Letter.

The influence which such discussions have on the outlook and action of those who take part in them, and the stimulus which they may pass on to others, is more important than any conclusions which they may formulate. But when any definite conclusions emerge, these can be made public in the Christian News-Letter, or elsewhere, or they may be circulated privately to other groups. When published they will commit no one but those who were responsible for their preparation. Their value will lie wholly in the truth and force of what they contain. What is aimed at is not one central responsibility attempting to impose a particular set of political or social ideas, but a variety of separate responsibilities linked in closer or looser form to a common centre.

The means proposed for keeping touch between the Council of the Frontier and groups or individuals interested in its work are: personal contacts made by members of the Council and others closely connected with its activities; visits by the whole-time officers of the Council; week-end and other conferences; and the Christian News-Letter. But till the Council is in a position to acquire a

somewhat larger staff, what can be achieved under the first three heads is inevitably restricted in quantity. For the present the Christian News-Letter is the chief means by which, in so far as the editor may approve, the Council can make available to wider circles the results of common thinking, activity and experiment which come within the range of its interest and knowledge.

There is one consideration by which the Council is specially stimulated to go forward. Out of the chaos of ideas and babel of voices there is beginning to appear a remarkable convergence of opinion, emanating from very different sources and expressed in very different accents, concerning what is wrong with the world to-day and what is the essential Christian task in relation to that world. It seems possible that through this convergence may be heard something which the Spirit to-day is saying to the Churches. With this in mind the Council aspires that the key-note of its work should be realism; on the one hand, relentless realism about God as the one determining and decisive factor in everything, and on the other hand, an intimate and unsentimental understanding of the modern world, its techniques and operating motives. All the sporadic activities which may be undertaken will be held together by this governing idea.

W. H. MOBERLY,

Chairman of the Christian Frontier Council.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

OCTOBER 21ST, 1942



Supplement to
C.N.-L. No. 156

MIDNIGHT HOUR

By R. GREGOR SMITH

The characteristic of modern society is that it is adrift, its familiar landmarks have disappeared, and it is in danger of breaking up. The common proposals for saving it are nugatory, for they are made without that sense of crisis, of doom and disintegration, which alone is able to impart an elemental urgency into the whole situation. Both Christianity, as it is commonly presented and practised, and our social order, which is itself the outcome of an earlier florescence of Christian faith, have lost touch with the source of faith. That is, they no longer depend consciously and directly on God as the Lord of history, that is, as the Lord both of the Church and of the whole world. Thus plans and principles and standpoints, whether of those who have a defiant faith in a coming "new order," or of those who seek, in a quietist resignation to social evils, some refuge for their souls, do not have the depth of insight and the might of faith which are able to produce real Christian action in society.

FACING CATASTROPHE

For Christians, then, the first immediate and pressing demand is that they should be open to the possibility of change. The present situation is one of doom: the organized Churches, along with the whole social order, are caught in the rushing waters of impending catastrophe. For the very reason that they have so long been associated with the specific social order of Western civilization the Churches have now no foothold on steady ground from which they may speak to the world. Their only real ground is that of utter dependence in faith on God as the Lord of all. But as a matter of fact they fall within the same orbit of judgment as the social order which they seek to influence.

It is not possible to find a way out of this tragedy of disintegration by attempting to distinguish the life of the Churches from the life of Christianity. The Churches are the life of Christianity. But they exist without

real, single-hearted and deliberate recourse to the only source of their life, to God speaking in Christ. Of course Christ is the ostensible object of the service of the Churches—that is the real factor making for the possibility of change, and perhaps the main reason why the Churches are still able to recruit and maintain the allegiance of thoughtful Christian people. But none the less, the service of Christ in the Churches is relativized, that is, it is found along with a multitude of other concerns which are peripheral to this service. The pure service of Christ does not exist as a characteristic social phenomenon to-day. For this reason alone, if for no other, the Churches are in danger of dying—but the death of a branch stifled by parasitic growths, not the death which is the necessary way to life with Christ. Only this death, that is, a change or reversal of the whole habit of life, can restore the pure concern for the service of Christ which may enable the Churches to stay the general catastrophe. Or if it is indeed too late for that, it is still true that only such a change or reversal will enable the Churches to survive the catastrophe. Only, that is to say, a constant purifying of the faith of individual Christians and an intensifying of spiritual expectancy in the Churches as the community to whom God speaks, will enable them in their turn to speak again to the world with the voice of Christ.

THE SPHERES OF CHURCH AND STATE

It seems to be extremely difficult for most, even intelligent, Christian people to see that this need for purifying and intensifying the life of the Spirit in the Churches is more than high-flown words, and is indeed the imperative demand laid upon us by God. The difficulty corresponds to the unfortunate lack of power in most "recalls to religion" and the like to communicate any urgent sense of reality. The reason for this state of affairs has already been noted: the life of the Churches, and of all Christians, is so involved in the social structure that, far from really

giving a lead to the life of the community, the Churches cannot see themselves as existing in real distinction from the present social structure. We need to see much more clearly the difference of the purpose of the Church from that of the State. The Church is primarily concerned with witnessing to the life of the Spirit as that is given through Christ. This is both the source and the being of the Church. The State, on the other hand, is not concerned *directly* with the life of the Spirit, but with maintaining order and attaining some approximation to social justice. There must, therefore, always be a deep underlying tension between Church and State, according as each pursues its proper ends. This tension is not in its healthy form mere hostility, but it is a real relation, that is, there is an interaction of the spheres of Church and State. The Church receives from the State room for its specific witness to the life of the Spirit, and the State learns from the Church—more precisely, from the Gospel—about its own ends, about its principles of action, and indeed about the very nature of real order and real justice.

Church and State, then, may live and work together only when there is this clear recognition of the difference between their true purposes. To-day the State is vocal as never before, and, at least in the totalitarian countries, more or less clear about its aims. But among the democracies there is no clear understanding of these purposes. The Church in particular is confused about its own resources and about the source of its distinctive strength. Thus it dissipates its energy in proposing solutions for conditions and problems which are really the work of the State. This is not to say that the Church should abandon its concern with social order and post-war planning and the like, matters with which, in default of State concern about them, it is bound to have to do. But this work is always secondary, and moreover depends for its reality and efficacy on a prior awareness of the Church's real sphere.

HOW CAN RENEWAL COME ?

How then is the Church to come again to itself ? How are the traditional exhortations to faith and devotion, and seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and serving God not mammon, and dying with Christ, and being born again, to be made

insistent and inevitable and critical to the heart and conscience of the Church ? From what side are we to look for this deepening of consciousness ? Where are Christian people who discern the signs of the times to find guidance and the hope of corporate Christian action ? From the theologians ? But they seem to be more interested in understanding than in being. From the ecclesiastical leaders ? But they seem to be tied to the traditional expressions of activity, working within what Macmurray calls the "conservative" type of religion, and bound by their very position, and the position of the Churches within the nation, to work as much as servants of the national need as servants of Christ.

Perhaps only from poets, from those who see deep into the pain and the futility of modern purposes, is some guidance to be expected. The poets, and those who write with the insight of poets, are the seers for our crisis.

"What is a poet ?" asked Kierkegaard. "He is an unhappy man who hides deep torments in his heart, but whose lips are so shaped that when a sigh or a cry breaks from them it sounds like sweet music . . . And men throng about him and say, Sing soon again, and that means, Let new torments martyr your soul and let your lips continue to be shaped as before ; for a cry would trouble us, but the music is life-giving."

A DOCUMENT OF CRISIS

It is in such a way that one of these rare souls has written, under the title of *Midnight Hour*,¹ one of the most moving and searching documents of our age. It is not only a record of conversion, of what being reborn means, not only a statement by one who is deeply versed in the best writing of our own day and of the whole European tradition ; but it is also a microcosmic presentation of the whole spiritual crisis of our time. All the questions raised in this Supplement are faced by Nicodemus with precisely that quality of urgency and depth which are so essential if the right course of action is to be found. The alternatives presented to us by our situation may be put in different ways according to the nature of our own particular crisis. For Nicodemus the demand is primarily one of what he calls denial of the "telluric," earth-derived powers of spirit and self, and affirmation of the God-given power of life in the Spirit. For others

¹ By Nicodemus. Faber and Faber, 8/6. The title is suggested by the saying of Kierkegaard, "There comes a midnight hour when all men must unmask," and the pseudonym by the question of Nicodemus in St. John's Gospel, "How can a man be born when he is old ?"

the issue assumes the proportions of a conflict between two religions, the Nazi faith in *Blut und Boden* and the supernatural claim of Christ. For most of us, as for Nicodemus, the alternatives fall within the sphere of Christianity, where the demand to be born again opposes and sharply criticizes our customary desire to look on our Christianity as part of a continuous and progressively unfolding condition. This naïve assumption that no real judgment on our condition needs to be made has been shattered by the judgment which has already overtaken the structure of Western civilization. Nicodemus sees very clearly that his own spiritual crisis represents in little the crisis of our age. A reading of his journal reveals the troubled depths across which our society is drifting.

But Nicodemus's experience—of encounter with God, of integration following on disintegration, of peace after his catastrophe—does not end in isolation, any more than the crisis itself took place in isolation. Though with many a struggle, and wistful glance towards the cloister as the place where alone "pure Christianity" could be practised, he moves in the end to clarity about the Christian action which is right for him; he must align himself publicly with the visible Church, and from there seek to "preach Christ, preach Christ, preach Christ."

What a commonplace ending this seems to be to a story of such intense conflict of spirit and such deep and wonderful experience. Hear, for instance, this characteristic passage:—

"That peace fell upon me suddenly after the most agonizing crisis of my life and in the deepest and darkest hell into which my spirit has ever fallen; I want to try to seize something of its quality before I lose it. It is as though I now swung to the immense rhythm of an ocean of eternal being like a gull rising and falling in heaving waves, as though I have only to withdraw within my soul to hear a constant singing like the diapason of the sea, or a 'going' of wind in the trees. I have but to look (now without effort) and I see men and things transfigured with that burning being, that wholeness, that still expectancy . . . Behind all motion I feel an immense rest, behind all speech and song a vast and brooding stillness, behind each face I see some glory shining, and, in things and shapes which seemed uncomely and corrupt, a burning beauty. It seems no straining of words to say that I see all things 'in God,' and know that the rhythm, the music, the fire, the

beauty, the peace which I behold and hear are the very 'shekinah' and glory of God irradiating, sustaining every creature."

To pass from this authentic contemplation of God to a world and a Church racked by pain and sin is like passing from day to sudden night. How may this speech in solitude with God, who has led this "cragman of Christ" to such remote places, across heights far above the valley where our age loves to dwell with its Golden Calf—how may this speech be translated so that it may be understood by men down in the valley? How may this absolute and incontrovertible meeting with God, this integration of a human personality, be related to the rocking and crumbling structures of society? Here, in the world as we know it, such an experience seems remote, desirable indeed, but without relevance to a world where people are *used*, not *met* as companions to whom the same God waits to speak; a world ruled by the blind forces of organization and the incessant demands of profit and not by the Gospel.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE

It is the signal worth of Nicodemus's message that he sees the necessity of this solitary speech with God being translated into social action. God's Word is not fully heard till it is realized in the commonplace world. There are always those two sides to Christian action, first the "experience," more precisely the *act*, of God's grace, and second the confirmation of that act in the ordinary world. All politics, all organization, all weighing of possibilities and laying of plans are valueless without the prior encounter with God. Without that encounter they do not have the stamp of true humanity. The only possible humanity is the one depicted in Nicodemus himself, the one that is condemned and shattered by God's judgment and then re-integrated through Christ into life with God. This is what Nicodemus, following Kierkegaard, calls the way "through death to life," the way of despair in all merely human achievements, the way of a new birth. Only when this has really taken place is there the possibility of undertaking effective action for the need of society.

This analysis is derived from the life of Christ. Christ's life is the embodiment of this action, first the negative and solitary experience of denial of the world, detachment from life and hatred of the world, and then the positive and corporate experience of affirmation of the world, attachment to life,

and love of all men. The movement of Christ's life from the perfection of society in the "bosom of the Father" through the fallen world back to that perfection involves the Cross. The bridge between life with God and the integration of the life of society is, therefore, the crucified God-man. This is a permanent fact of history, and in our own individual lives as well as in the life of the Church and of the whole human community there must be the same paradoxical loss of life and dying with Christ in order to save life and live with God. The crucified Christ is the living statement of God's demand on all society. The Cross of Christ characterizes the way of regeneration for all society.

Our own age is passing through the experience of judgment without being aware of its meaning. By its own actions it has accelerated its own disintegration. Only by relating its own crisis to the action of God in Christ may it be renewed. That is, it must see its predicament as God's judgment upon it; it must reach total despair in its own ability to save itself by any manner of means; and it must be aware that God offers this way alone which has been hewn by Christ's passage through history—that is, the way of the Cross, of life through death. Both for the individual and for the whole Church the choice is offered between the Cross as God's only way to Himself, and the self and what Nicodemus calls "demonism (it is another name for Naziism) . . . and the false reintegration of an inorganic totalitarianism." Being twice-born is the incredible yet actual means by which God brings about a reversal of the whole human situation.

Is anything which is less catastrophic, anything which is less aware of the doom of God on all human enterprise, adequate to our day? Is even this call of Nicodemus able to bridge the crevasses which are opening everywhere, in every branch of the Church, in every State, through all Europe and all that world which has developed out of Western civilization? Does the call from the real world come too late? Are the willing, discerning souls not too few, too isolated, too scattered, ever to constitute an effective nucleus of the life of the Spirit? These are Nicodemus's own questions, and the despair in them is his also. Perhaps after all we have to prepare to abandon ship; in the extremity of despair

there may seem to be no hope left in the customary system of life or in the value of ameliorative Christian action from within that system. In the end it may be that the cleavage between the optimist once-born Christians, the pillars of a national Church, and those who think like Nicodemus (and like Kierkegaard, and St. Augustine) will become too broad to be spanned by common action. For the first group the peril would then be identity with and assimilation to the State (as with the "German Christians"); for the second group action would then have to take the form of some as yet unformulated society or order or common life, with all the perils attached to a separatist "Montanist" Church.

But precisely the call of despair is the call of real hope. Only such a despair in all human endeavour is able to provide the conditions of spirit in which Christians may still, as Nicodemus, continue to live their faith within the traditional order. For in essence this kind of living is a waiting for death, and a passing through death to life with Christ. For those who see as Nicodemus does there can be no withdrawal; they have already suffered that reversal, that complete turning round and turning back to God; and they must be prepared to suffer it again and again if they are prepared to keep the faith at that point in their lives where God's demand for regeneration collides with the craving of the old self for "the solace and security of use and wont." To reintegrate our Christianity by "a new fervour of the contemplative life and a new urgency in 'the practice of the presence of God'" is the main work of Christians to-day. The life of contemplation of God, speech with Him and speech from Him to all the world, is the only way to the real life of action. All the more is this the critical need of our day, when God is speaking in a way that brooks of no delay and no mild optimism in a happy outcome. Society has already exposed its own spiritual bankruptcy. Only by realizing the tragedy of our plight, where true human purposes no longer guide human action, may we begin to realize that there is a way "beyond tragedy." In the way of a life regenerated through Christ the almost lost awareness of the prior, constitutive and absolute relation of human life to God's life may be lived and worked for as the hope of the world.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

NOVEMBER 4TH, 1942

THE FIELD OF ACTION¹

By MOIRA SYMONS

If a great deal of discussion, and even genuine concern, were sufficient to establish a new order of society we should all, by now, be living in a veritable Utopia. Why is it that with all our planning there is such impotence to achieve the ideal? Why do we so manifestly lack the power to create the kind of community for which, with differing degrees of clarity or vagueness, we all long? The majority of the well-intentioned human race are caught in the old, old predicament which St. Paul recognized and pinned down in the words "for what I would that I do not; but what I hate, that I do." And there they stick, continuing to do what they really disapprove of, until at last they stop even disapproving because "you can't change human nature." Sometimes they deceive themselves into thinking that they have escaped from the vicious circle by indulging in activities which have an appearance of social usefulness, but whose main function is as a sop to the conscience. The only people who get anywhere are those who cheerfully accept their own limitations and the limitations of the human race for what they really are and proceed to organize on that basis. What we are concerned with is not to produce a society for saints, but one that can be worked with comparative safety by sinners. Some, at least, of the reasons for our failure are not as profound and mysterious as we like to make out.

LEARN IN THE CHURCH—ACT IN THE WORLD

It is high time that we restrained our perpetual discussion of large-scale social issues. It is, without doubt, an ingenious device of the devil to keep us discussing matters over which we have no control so that we shall never discover the means of effective action which do lie within our power. An intellectual grasp of the nature of the problems which

confront society is both necessary and excellent, but it can, and does, cause paralysis if it remains in the intellect. If things are to change, the expert and the ordinary person must begin by acting in the very ordinary fabric of society.

For the Christian the pattern and background of all his thinking about society is that "Beloved Society," the Church, in which he learns the true meaning of personal relationships through loving God with his whole heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbour as himself. But what we are always failing to recognize is that *while we learn in the Church we must act in the world*. This failure leads to two great mistakes.

Firstly, we are always trying to turn the Church into our world. The way to meet the social problem, we say, is to have more and better Church activities—to get as many people as possible to feel that in going to services on Sunday, the church badminton club on Monday, choir practice on Tuesday, prayer meeting on Wednesday, Sunday school preparation on Thursday, minister's discussion group on Friday and church social on Saturday, they are creating the kind of community which God wants. A Church which does none of these things is said to be dead, and one which does them all is very alive; whereas the probable truth is that they are both dead to the real function of the Church in the world.

The second mistake is our insistence on trying to make the Church and Christian groups pass public judgment on matters which do not, and should not, come within their sphere of judgment, in the hope that by so doing the social order we all desire will more quickly come into being.

It is not possible to discuss these two points fully in the space of this article. The Archbishop of Canterbury in his recent Penguin "Christianity and Social Order" has dealt very

¹ Part of the material of this supplement has also been used in a contribution entitled "Individualism and Community" in *The Christian Basis of a New Society*, published by the World's Y.W.C.A., and is incorporated here with their permission.

effectively with the subject. The main point for our purpose is that while the Church must announce Christian principles and point out where the social order is in conflict with them, it must pass on to its members *as citizens and acting in their civic capacity* the task of doing something about it. Christians lose the power to do this if they remain almost entirely within their specifically Christian groupings, or if they think that it is only through these groupings, their activities and their pronouncements that the new order will be achieved.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

In the same Penguin the Archbishop deals significantly with the importance to the life of the State of the network of communities and fellowships in which the real wealth of human life consists. "Liberty," he says, "is actual in the various cultural, commercial and local associations that men form. In each of these a man can feel that he counts for something and that others depend on him as he on them." Individualism ignores the necessity for these groupings; collectivism, especially in its extreme form in the totalitarian state, imposes groupings which may appear to meet the need for community, but in which men are not free to be themselves. In Britain we have been fortunate in the persistence of a vigorous community life in some of the smaller towns and villages, mainly in the industrial north, which resisted the inroads of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century individualism, and which became the cradle of the trade union and co-operative movements and the training ground of many of our best labour leaders. To-day, however, the real community life of these centres is breaking down. The respectable suburb with its semi-detached houses, all modern conveniences, carefully fenced gardens and almost total lack of any kind of community spirit which is not painfully and artificially fostered is regarded as the ideal. The compact mining village on the outskirts of an industrial centre with its rows of dull but friendly houses, its allotments rather than gardens, its one or two main streets where you can be sure of meeting everybody, its Co-op. Stores which were founded and run by the fathers and grandfathers of the children running about in the streets, its Church and Chapels to which everyone "belongs," even though they may not go, and on whose premises the Workers' Educational Association holds its classes and the Miners' Brass Band

practises—this is the kind of community which is dying out. I have had experience of both and there isn't a question in my mind as to which is the more real community (in spite of the superior amenities and the very real neighbourliness of individuals in the suburb!). Unfortunately, there is no question in the minds of the majority of my Christian acquaintances, but that the respectable suburb is an advance on the mining village. What *is* the value of putting people in "better" surroundings such as garden suburbs or these vast housing estates if you kill both the possibility of, and their desire for, real community life? The building of a community centre and the installation of a social worker to organize community activities is no substitute for a spontaneous and vigorous indigenous growth. What the answer is to this particular form of breakdown I don't know—but the first step is certainly for people to become aware that it *is* a breakdown and to stop having such inadequate and often shoddy ideas as to what community life really is. Community centres, the compulsory enrolment of young people in youth organizations, the increase of social activities, whether sponsored by the Churches or the town council, can never be more than the patching up of a bad situation until some far deeper move towards an integrated society begins to take place.

WHERE TO ACT

Another important step is for people to stop trying to create so many new societies for the improvement of society and to *act* in those movements which have already proved their worth in the achievement of some, at least, of the ideals which we are always discussing. How many people who spend hours talking about the terrible effects of vested interests and private enterprise on our economic system ever think of becoming active members of a co-operative society? There are folk of my acquaintance who think the co-operative movement is an excellent thing and frequently talk of its achievements, but they are not prepared to do their shopping there because they get slightly better service, usually in some of the more fancy foods, at a private grocer's. The trade union movement is another example of something about which people are content to talk endlessly without acting. How many Christians in organized occupations are even members—let alone active ones—of their unions?

And how many people engaged in work which has not an obvious union have bothered to enquire of their local trades council as to which they should join? In matters like these I find that ordinary working people often have a natural honesty of action which seems to elude their more intellectual brethren, and are very quick to detect and dislike inconsistencies between profession and practice.

Local government is another thing which the majority of Christians find they have no time for. Mr. Henry Brooke, in Supplement No. 122, has dealt so well with the case for taking responsibility in local affairs that I need not dwell on it here. It is equally important to use the services provided by our public authorities. Very few of the middle and upper classes, who do most of the talking both in the Church and out of it, ever dream of availing themselves of such services as the health clinics, which do much to foster a sense of community in those who attend them. My own attendance at an ante-natal clinic, the birth of my baby in a county council war emergency hospital, and my weekly visits now to the baby welfare clinic have given me a really spontaneous sense of community. But most of my middle-class acquaintances regard my action as either very daring or faintly disreputable. Sometimes the public services are not as good as they should be; but that is no reason for avoiding them, any more than bad service is a reason for not shopping at a co-op. The ideas behind these things are worth fighting for, but they can only be fought for from *within*. We have no right merely to criticize from outside, and also, being human, we are much more likely to act about something which closely concerns us. Education is a case in point. If only all members of the Board of Education, Local Education Authorities, and even members of the countless discussion groups on education, had sent their children (if any) to elementary schools there is no question but that most of the reforms we would like to see would by now have been actual.

(Incidentally, all this has a bearing on the birth rate, which I am sure has a direct effect on community life. The initial cost of having a baby under a well organized county council scheme is small compared with the amount most middle-class parents spend. And if you are prepared to "risk" state education, the bugbear of expensive school fees is removed.)

The results of the inhibitions of the middle and upper classes in Britain is that the working classes have, on the whole, a monopoly of any vigorous community life there is—not, in most cases, because they are any less individualistic than any one else, but because they have not been able to afford the privileges which encourage people to indulge in their individualism. They have, therefore, much to teach us, but only if we are prepared to go in on the ground-floor, with neither false humility nor patronage. The society girl who virtuously goes slumming twice a week, and the young intellectual who "identifies" himself with the working classes by putting on a red tie and not washing, are only extreme examples of two methods of social action attempted by far too many people who ought to know better.

EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY

The last decade has seen an immense increase in the number of groups who attempt to answer a chaotic society by organizing themselves on a basis of community living. It is difficult to assess the value of those which can be taken seriously. They are a sincere endeavour to find, in fellowship, a simple and disciplined pattern of life. They rarely, however, avoid withdrawal from the real conflicts of society, and the simplicity of their own solutions often makes them naive in their social judgments. Their importance is probably not so much in terms of constructive social action as of a witness to certain values which should find their place in the life of a people. There will always be a few who are called to this particular type of experiment, but we need far more urgently the kind of experiment which touches ordinary living and creates "community" in terms of the day-to-day traffic of society.

The Gospel does not give us a social programme, but it does proclaim *justice in human relationships*, and justice involves a measure of equality in regard to material goods as well as equality in law. Here, if we would only see it, lies a clear call to action. We should act as justly as possible, even in an unjust society. (Needless to say, being sinners, we shall never act with more than approximate justice, but that would take us a long way.) There are surely ways of acting justly in local situations which groups and individuals could discover if they were determined to act as well as talk. The main thing is that the basis of justice should be real; action which makes us feel nice is not necessarily socially

constructive. One possible experiment is the personal and group discipline known as national average spending. In a nutshell, it proposes that, as a rough economic justice, personal expenditure should be regulated by the average spending power of the community as a whole (which at present is roughly £145 per annum for a single adult). Worked on a group basis, any surplus is used first to make up the income of members earning under the average and then is returned to the community in such ways as are deemed socially useful by the group. Certain allowances are made to individuals for expenses connected with the actual receipt of a higher income and for activities considered important, but all these are checked by the group. It is no alternative to social and political action, nor is it to be confused with "voluntary poverty" (the standard of living which it allows is quite adequate for any normal person). What it does mean is the voluntary relinquishing of those privileges and securities which are dependent on the possession of a "comfortable" income, and it is a sound way of keeping social concern practical.¹

THE GOSPEL AND ACTION

Finally, the Christian has to realize that when it comes to creating the kind of com-

munity which he desires *his Christianity gives him no superior knowledge whatever as to how to do it*. It gives him a great many other things, but in this respect he is on an exact equality with anyone else who desires a new order of society. He has got to learn what does and what does not work shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people, many of whom never think seriously about Christianity at all or, if they do, have little use for it. More than that, he has to learn *from* them, especially if he has been hitherto chiefly concerned with thinking and acting within Christian groups. What he learns in the Church is the Gospel—the eternal good news about God and man, which is the same whether you live under feudalism, monopolistic capitalism or national socialism. I hope the "accent on action" in this article has not obscured the fact that unless he really knows what this good news is he has no ultimate criterion of judgment about society at all. The kind of Christianity which is all for social action and has no real roots in the living faith of the Church is just as dangerous as the "Christian isolationism" which I described earlier. Learning in the Church, acting in the world—so perhaps it may be given to us to share in creating community out of chaos.

¹ See *The National Average: A Study in Social Discipline*, by Alexander Miller. Price 4d. post free from the Secretary, Shadwell Group, 33 Townsend Drive, St. Albans, Herts.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

NOVEMBER 18TH, 1942

PLANNING WITHIN LIMITS

By GEORGE EVERY, S.S.M.

It is easy, perhaps too easy, to agree that a planned society is inevitable and desirable. I say too easy because when once a key word is almost universally used in a good sense there is great danger that the principle behind it will be applied recklessly in all directions, in forgetfulness of the real nature of things. In the first French Revolution the principle of democratic election was instantly applied to the reform of the army and the Church. As a result the discipline of the army broke down until it was restored by a new race of autocratic officers, and the violation of the principles of hierarchy universally observed in Catholic Christendom led inevitably to a schism in the Church of France and a permanent breach between the Church and the Revolution. Again, in the middle of the nineteenth century many English Radicals applied the principle of Free Trade not only to the poor man's loaf, but to his labour, which they refused to protect from the hazards of the open market, and not only to his material needs, but to his spiritual education. No religious establishments, no state-aid for religious instruction, must in any way hamper his freedom to decide for himself what his outlook on life should be. But the results of this misplaced liberalism were wage-slavery, only modified later by fresh state interferences, and to a great extent a standardized outlook on life, limited and determined by an education which had concentrated on objective and ascertainable facts, and left controversial issues swathed in the mists of doubt.

LIMITS OF HUMAN ACTION

But as there are many things which cannot be left to freedom of choice, so there are many which by their very nature cannot be planned. You cannot plan spiritual revival, or a revival of culture, and only within very strict limits of wind and weather and soil fertility, and the natural habits of plants and birds and beasts, can you plan agriculture. You may

lay down a seedbed for poets as you do for onions, but the uncertainty of germination is even greater. The best that can be done is to remove all visible weeds and other obstacles to the growth of food and of art. But if you try to force food, or to force culture or spirituality, by methods which are not in harmony with the nature of the ground and of the living being, you will find neither onions nor poets, nor yet sanctified persons, but stunted, withered weeds. Some kinds of political and economic planning have done and still are doing no little injury, not only to poetry and art and religion, but to the common or garden arts of food production, on whose vitality the human race depends for physical existence.

The man who deals with what English law calls "movable," as distinct from "real" property, is always tempted to believe in the possibilities of infinite expansion and progress, and to imagine that "industry has reached a stage in which there is now no necessity for anyone in the world to go short of food," as Mr. Eden said at Nottingham the other day. Behind this odd slip of the tongue is a habit of mind which assumes that all demands could be supplied if they could only be made effective through a money-income. No doubt the experience of this war has proved that industries can be developed with surprising rapidity in most parts of the world where industrial goods are needed, and unskilled labour is at hand to make them. And it would be well if money-incomes were better distributed than these and other new industries might serve the needs of peace as well as of war. But agricultural development, which after all is the essential thing if all the world is to have enough to eat, does not proceed so easily to order, for plants and animals have to be allowed time to breathe and breed. The poet, the priest, and the farmer all know that in their line of business there can be no increased production without increase in labour and suffering. They recognize the

truth in the old Greek doctrine of *hubris*, of
"Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other."

THE DISCIPLINE OF NATURE

According to this doctrine, there are certain permanent limits of human action. What are these limits? First of all the natural resources of the earth. This aspect of the matter has been ably discussed in Dr. K. E. Barlow's recent book, *The Discipline of Peace*. Doubtless some of his conclusions are controversial, but it would be difficult to resist the conviction, which has now been argued by some very able scientists for over a hundred years, that no human community, nor any animal species, can afford to refuse a contribution towards the preservation and renewal of the soil in proportion to the plant life which they devour. All large and complex civilizations tend to ignore or evade this responsibility. They pile on the backs of the patient tillers of the soil a taller and taller burden of merchants, soldiers, artisans, and officials, who must all be fed; and in return they give, instead of manure and agricultural science, the expensive services of the money-lender. The results may be read in the sands of Iraq, Libya and Tunis, the exhausted and deserted granaries of the ancient world. As Liebig pointed out more than a hundred years ago, the soil of the Roman Campagna drained away in the sewers of the city of Rome. It is only in China that the soil seems to last for ever, and that is because the Chinese have made the principle of balance between animal and plant life an essential part of their moral tradition. Not only their farms but their cities return every scrap of manure to the ground.

Modern civilization has given agricultural machinery and much more science than any previous culture. We have yet to see what biology may do to preserve and increase the fertility of stock and plants. But we have already seen the disastrous results of single-crop production for a world-market in the wheat and cotton belts of North America, where the earth has been ground into the dust-bowl, so grimly pictured in Steinback's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, because the small American farmer could not afford to think of the future. He had to make money here and now to meet his expenses and pay his mortgage. These issues have been in some measure obscured while industrial countries like our own continued to draw their food supplies from agricultural countries under their economic

control, whose long-term problems they did not understand. But if in the near future Great Britain becomes a debtor to a Canada and an Australia who have their own industries, it will be impossible as well as unwise for her to resist a right and natural movement in those countries in favour of a more cautious and conservative agriculture. General Smuts has long ago declared soil erosion South Africa's most important long-term problem. In the United States the cost of a battleship programme has been spent upon soil restoration in the Tennessee valley. When all the overseas countries get to grips with the problem of establishing a more balanced agriculture and a more stable pattern of economic life it may well be that they will refuse to supply Great Britain with food except in return for real services rendered, not in toothpaste or chewing gum, but in plant that is of use in the restoration of the soil and the development of their own industries.

THE RANGE OF IMAGINATION

Another limitation upon world planning is the narrow range of the human imagination. Most men's imaginative horizon is limited by geography, history, culture and religion, by all those complex factors which make up a nationality. Nationality may merge in a civilization sharing some common history and common standards of life, but no community wishes to be dependent on another civilization for absolutely essential goods and services unless it is certain of its own superior power. In the last century Great Britain was able to draw supplies from all over the world, and even to preach the doctrine that all civilized nations ought to do the same, but only because her fleet controlled every ocean, and nearly every other country was dependent on her financial and industrial organization for capital and machinery. When she has had the experience of losing the command not only of the Mediterranean but of the Pacific and the Bay of Bengal, and when she is a debtor, not a creditor nation, she must eventually come to share the desire of all nations for a better balance of agriculture and industry within their own borders which will enable them to be independent of any single source of foreign food supplies, even if they must still import food from some other countries.

English people, for obvious historical and practical reasons, are exceptionally interested in overseas affairs. Yet for every Englishman who knows any American history,

twenty know a great deal of the history of Europe. The history of the British connection with India has never been a normal part of the educated Englishman's education. This limitation of interest and knowledge seems to be the fundamental reason why a deadlock between Britain and India was inevitable as soon as the Indian problem became too urgent to be postponed. Britain has failed India, not because she was greedy of her power, or even very much aware of her economic advantages in the Indian market, but because her public men have never been able to spare the time to understand what all these confusing Indian communities really want, until zero hour struck and the Japanese were in Singapore. Even in the eighteen-sixties, as Trollope wittily observed, a debate on India was the one sure way to empty the House of Commons.

Since then the cable, the ocean liner and the radio have vastly improved communications with India, but they have not brought the Far East within the range of imaginative vision of the average European. It remains a land of magic and mystery, as it always was. It may, of course, be argued that if we all knew something of the cultural history of other civilizations, obstacles to mutual understanding would vanish. But the most important differences between cultures are the most difficult to understand. In their science, in their economic techniques, and in many of their manners and customs the Japanese have been growing more and more like Europeans or Americans in the last eighty years. And in literature they are, I believe, assiduous imitators of Western fashions. The difference in their standards of value has become obvious through their political conduct in the last ten years; but in order to understand it at all fully, I suspect that we should need more knowledge of their literature and mythology than could easily be conveyed in translation. It is perhaps as hard for a Western European really to understand Russia. This point about the difficulty of alien cultures was made some years ago by Mr. T. S. Eliot in *After Strange Gods*; and he speaks with peculiar authority, as the one considerable English poet who has been influenced by Indian philosophy and poetry.

I am not denying the importance of doing all we can to promote the sympathetic understanding of other cultures. The study of a civilization other than our own, like the study of Greek literature, can do a great deal to purge us from false assumptions about the

universality and naturalness of our own modes of thought and behaviour. But I see no reason to believe that such studies will have any immediate effect in making a world political union easier, or that in a world where Britain has failed to win the confidence of the Indian peoples, a syndicate of democratic powers could succeed in managing the undeveloped world of Asia, Africa and South America, with all its susceptibilities and passions, or in imposing any new order upon Central and Eastern Europe. A certain amount of world organization there must be, of a practical kind, connected with the control of traffic on the sea and in the air and the distribution of dangerous drugs and rare minerals. But on issues where human passions are excited, plans must be drawn to a more modest scale.

HUMAN SINFULNESS

For there is a third limit. Man is not only a creature with a limited imagination, living in a world of limited natural resources. He is sensitive and passionate and quarrelsome, enfeebled by original sin, as Christian theology says and modern humanists echo by way of a reply. In the last century this dogma was frequently explained away, but it remained true nevertheless. Man set himself up to be an angel or a demi-god, and in his self-confidence achieved much that could not have been attempted had he set out with a more modest view of his own capacities; but in his achievement he discovered his limitation, and his temptation now is to regard himself as no more than a bundle of impulses and complexes, or a beast driven to the slaughter. But in his depression as well as in his exaltation, his true nature asserts itself.

TITAN OR MAN?

A world plan, conceived by man in his pride, can only be a presumptuous intrusion upon the prerogative of God, Who alone plans the world. But God does give to human communities bits and pieces to plan on a scale which a practicable number of planners can see and understand. The difference between a plan which accepts such limitations, perceived through failure and suffering, and one which ignores all boundaries save the will of the planners themselves, seems to me much more important than any other kind of difference between totalitarianism and what we call democracy. If the democratic powers set out to impose an approved pattern of life upon every other nation, with-

out regard to circumstances, sentiments and traditions, as the Axis powers are trying to do, they would be totalitarian democracies, and their governments would more and more deteriorate into the dictatorship of those interests which are most powerfully organized and most influential in this generation. But the democracies have shown, not only by their dealings with Russia but by their attitude to other authoritarian regimes in Brazil, Portugal, Turkey and Greece, that they do not believe in any one form of government applicable to all times and places. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that a similar restraint will govern not only their dealings with Central Europe, but the reform of their own affairs.

The English have been called Pelagians, believers in the natural goodness of man. But this description does not seem to allow for much more complex elements in their national tradition. They have never, for instance, given themselves up to wholehearted belief in the ideal virtues of any political system, including their own. And they have never been over confident of the future of their own empire. It was Kipling who wrote:—

“All our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.”

The Englishman's Utopianism is practical and scientific. It springs from the industrialist's blindness to the limits of human innovation. The engineer, having seen so many inventions, cannot believe that a technique will not be discovered to solve each impasse of social engineering. But though England has produced a Bentham and a H. G. Wells for the practical devotees of indefinite pro-

gress towards more and more material prosperity in a larger and larger world with more and more people in it, I do not think that Rousseau could have been English, or even Emerson. And an English Goethe would not have let Faust off so lightly.

In the moral sphere the Englishman is not a sentimentalist. Never having had a revolution, he is extremely chary of large, abstract declarations of the rights of man. He prefers to believe in the liberties of England, and in a constitution adapted to his state by a long process of history. That is why he has always been the natural champion of the independence of small European states who want to cultivate their own gardens in their own way.

The Germans would turn all these states into agricultural dependencies of the Reich. The British would help them to maintain their political and cultural independence by building up their own industries, as Russia and the British dominions have done. If we tap all available sources of power in rivers and streams, the tides and the wind, to a very great extent we can have industries where we want them. But the more industries other peoples have, the more the English will need to cultivate their own land, and that will mean a radical change in their way of life, for they cannot make gardens grow on the top floors of apartment buildings. Food must grow where it can, and men and women must live where it is. In the long run this is necessary if it is to go on growing, and if they are to enjoy their right and proper place in the pattern of God's creation. Even now they dig up blitzed sites, and cabbages are growing on Bethnal Green.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



CHRISTIANITY, JUSTICE AND MODERN SOCIETY

By G. LEIBHOLZ, Dr.Phil., LL.D.

Readers of the Christian News-Letter are fully aware of the acute and serious crisis of modern society and of the responsibility resting on Christians, if the world is to be saved from doom and destruction. We realize that in a disintegrating world Christianity has again become of immediate relevance to the actual situation of to-day, and that only a new apprehension of the meaning of the Christian message and its total attitude towards the world can preserve the fundamental values of Western civilization. I wish to confirm the truth of this by directing attention to an issue, the importance of which has not hitherto been appreciated in its full weight. This has to do with the spheres of politics and law, with which Christianity is no less vitally concerned than with all other spheres of human life.

THE NATURE OF THE STATE

Satisfactory conditions for the practical functioning of society in the political world can only be secured by the State, and it is the State which enables a nation or people to act as a united whole in the political sphere. There is thus an essential connection between the State and politics.

It is true the State may also act in ways that are not political. For instance, it is a fundamental principle of the constitutional State that justice, even when administered by the State, should be exercised independently of any political influence. Or the State may have direct ownership of banks, industrial enterprises and transport, and may conduct their affairs according to the principles of a private undertaking in a non-political way. But such activities are not specifically connected with the substance of the State. We can speak of a State without taking these activities into account. But a State without political activities and deprived of its political character would necessarily result in the disintegration of both State and nation.

Within the political activities of the State we make a distinction between major and minor political issues. In a specific sense those acts are political which are connected in one way or another with the foundation of the State and the highest and supreme aims of the community. In this sense those acts are political in which the everyday political issues are transcended and in some way or other the essential interests of the State, especially its right to its own existence and maintenance, are dealt with.

The relation of the political to the very existence of the State explains, first, why politics have their roots in a dynamic and irrational sphere. What is required to maintain the existence of the community cannot be foreseen. In its very nature politics refuses to be regarded as something static and rational. This is especially shown in those political acts which embody the political in the purest form, i.e. the acts of government which in their nature are incalculable and always made to suit a particular situation concretely given.

Secondly, it is this relation of the political to the existence of the State which explains why power plays such an eminent part in politics. Without power the State cannot "exist," not even the ethical State. Without power the State cannot perform its functions, especially in the maintenance of law and order. Without power society would utterly collapse. Chaos would prevail and no civilization would be possible. Power, therefore, is a vital and constitutive element of the State.

POLITICS AND RELIGION

It is because political life is inseparably bound up with the dynamic and irrational elements resulting from the fact of existence, that politics become so easily interwoven with religion. More than a century ago Donoso Cortes argued that every great political issue involves a theological issue, and Dr. N. Micklem in his recent *The Theology of Politics*

has similarly maintained that at bottom all our political problems are theological. That secular politicians have failed for the most part to recognize the religious character of the present political crisis is only another symptom of the predicament in which our society now finds itself.

This intimate connection between politics and religion can reach a point at which they coincide. The State then takes on the character of a Church. This is what has happened to-day. We know only too well that in the modern totalitarian State a political creed openly assumes a new quasi-religious character. The political dogma of race or class claims to possess the spiritual force to mould a new world acceptable to man. It openly aims at identifying again politics and religion, State and Church.

There can be no doubt that, if the religious craving of the masses for a true and living faith could be given satisfaction in this way, all the fundamental values of Western civilization would be perverted and in the end destroyed. This will become apparent if we consider the effect of such an attitude on the idea of justice and the fundamental principles of law.

THE IDEA OF JUSTICE

In the course of centuries many attempts have been made to define what justice is. The most convincing definition still seems to me to be the old definition that it consists in giving every man his due. This definition does not mean that men should be treated in an absolutely equal way but, on the contrary, that in every case justice should be done to the concrete individual circumstances. The treatment must differ in different cases, because the factors of which account has to be taken vary in each instance. A king, a judge, a teacher acts justly if he deals with each case on its individual merits or, in legal language, distributes proportionally rights and obligations.

This description of justice may seem unsatisfactory, since it is merely formal and does not indicate what is just and unjust, i.e. "every man's due" in a particular case. The views of what is due to every man vary greatly. The concrete ideals of justice are obviously different in the various epochs of history. Hence, justice seems to have no universal structure and to evade a universal fixation.

JUSTICE AND MORALITY

In order to get over this difficulty, the attempt has been frequently made since Plato and Kant to find another basis for justice. It has been said, and I think rightly, that justice is not an independent value and cannot stand by itself; that in its essential nature justice is based on reason and morality, i.e. on the moral axiom that we must do good and avoid evil. But justice can be founded on reason and morality in a secularized world only so long as there exist universal standards which give an unequivocal answer to the question what is reasonable or good or evil. It was believed in the eighteenth century, for example, that there was such an answer. At that time the principles of the secular natural law met with general acceptance, and the belief in the unity of the human species and in human reason, which was characteristic of humanism, rationalism and enlightenment, was still a living force.

To-day, however, when modern society is in danger of breaking up, belief in a spiritual unity of the world, or even of Europe, no longer exists. The shattering of this belief can be traced back to the liberal era. Those who have experienced the collapse of liberal democracy in Central or Western Europe know that in all these democracies fundamental political, moral and religious values were already in process of disintegration. Belief in absolute values was increasingly undermined by relativism, scepticism and subjectivism.

This disintegration helps us to understand why there is no longer to-day a common basis of argument between a man bred in the Western tradition and a Communist or National-Socialist. They no longer agree upon what is reasonable, good or just in the world of to-day. Disagreement about the moral foundation and the very nature of society goes so deep, that what is called justice in the modern totalitarian State is fundamentally different in substance and character from justice as understood in the West. It is only those who adhere to the Western tradition that acknowledge a universally binding reason, morality and justice. To the adherents of a totalitarian State reason and morality, and consequently justice, are merely instruments of their political creed.

JUSTICE AND CHRISTIANITY

Thus history shows convincingly that it is no longer possible to base the principle of

justice on morality or any kind of moral philosophy. Justice has to go back, as in former times, to its true origin and seek again its basis outside morality in the religious sphere. Professor O. C. Quick, in his small volume, *Christianity and Justice*, has shown persuasively that God's love is the ultimate ground of all justice and that, fundamentally, justice can only be justified if it proceeds from love, which is the creative principle of all justice on earth.

This foundation of justice on Christian love has important practical consequences. The divine justice which the Gospel proclaims does not cease to be individual and concrete. Christianity has no place for the mechanical conception of life for which God's law in society is an abstract and impersonal equality. On the contrary, it is essential to Christian justice that it should be adapted in a special way to each particular case.

But there is at the same time a fundamental change. Christian justice ceases to be merely formal. It can never lose hold of the fundamental Christian truth that all men are made in the image of God and that every human soul is of infinite value and absolute worth. This principle of the equality of all men in the sight of God explains why justice based on love regards each individual equally as an end in himself. Justice, as Christianity presents it to us, substitutes for the proportional equality of the classical definition of justice an absolute and general equality. It respects the personality without regard of persons. Christian justice, that is to say, demands both a differential treatment of men in the sense of a proportional equality which gives every man his due, and at the same time treats all persons alike on an absolutely equal footing.

JUSTICE AND THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF LAW

The Christian idea of justice makes it possible for us to give a more definite content to justice by developing those universal principles to which the Christian is committed by his faith and which are frequently called the principles of Natural Law. The desire, on the one hand, for a new social order and, on the other hand, for a Christian understanding of man's natural existence has again turned the minds of Christians to a search for some doctrine of Natural Law as a basis of a new order of secular life. I shall not try here to unfold the meaning of the law of Christianity or to set out the concrete principles which, as a given reality, must be the founda-

tion of a true order in society. For our present purpose we can content ourselves with the general statement that from the Christian view of man there follow certain fundamental principles, rights and duties which link man with God. They are derived from the fact that, according to God's will, the individual by nature and reason participates in the eternal law and is bound by the rules of the Old and New Testaments. It is true that it is easy to make mistakes in the analysis of these principles, but we may here take it for granted that somewhere in the life of the community there are limits which may only be transgressed if one at the same time repudiates those sacred principles which have their roots, directly or indirectly, in natural justice based on Christianity.

The relationship between Christian justice and these fundamental principles of a universal law is not difficult to define. For justice is a conception differing much less from Natural Law than is frequently assumed. At bottom, the principles which every kind of human order must respect are the inherent elements of justice and ultimately of Christianity. They are simply the making concrete and putting into practice of divine justice. This is why we cannot separate true Natural Law from its association with Christian faith and thought, and why the permanent principles of the law of nature depend on the eternal law of Christianity itself.

POLITICS AND JUSTICE IN THE MODERN TOTALITARIAN STATE

If we bear in mind the relationship between politics and religion, and the fact that justice must always be based on morality and ultimately on religion, we must conclude that wherever politics and religion become identified, politics and justice must also be brought into accord. This conclusion is of crucial importance at the present time. The secular totalitarian State, as we have seen, attempts to give its political creed a religious sanction, and as a result to identify politics and justice. It uses this argument quite explicitly. It claims to be a just state, a genuine *Rechtsstaat* (Constitutional State), as they say in National Socialist Germany, or a true *Stato giuridico*, as they allege in Fascist Italy. From this point of view, the "totalitarians" can argue that justice can exist only within the framework of a new conception of life (*Weltanschauung*) and that they are acting justly when they reinterpret all accepted values in accordance with the new creed, fill the old

formal idea of justice with a new content, and reject the universal fundamental principles which justice based on Christian love implies. From this point of view we cannot disprove the fundamental thesis, e.g. of Nazism, that "right is what serves the German people and wrong what harms them"; nor evade the further conclusion that the traditional constitutional checks which in a liberal democracy secure justice and law have lost their meaning and have, therefore, to be removed. The "totalitarians" can argue, as they actually do, that in the secular totalitarian State every man gets his due according to the new quasi-religious principle of Race, State or Class, and that the inhuman, unjust and sinful treatment, for instance, of the Jews, Poles, Greeks and other nations is just because other races and nations are essentially different from the "superior" nations and peoples and must, therefore, be treated differently. They even go as far as to claim that the new differential treatment of the various races and nations is the expression of a new kind of justice, equality and natural law. All this is not surprising if we keep in mind that in all these States justice is simply a part of politics and law a political act which must by its nature claim to be just, and which has to be applied by a judiciary that is essentially only a subordinate branch and political instrument of the Government.

THE VITAL ISSUE

The important conclusion to which we are brought is that we can only denounce the tyrannic and arbitrary administration of justice in subordination to politics if we base our ideas of justice and law on Christianity and "the inviolable and sacred standards of the Law of God," as Pope Pius XII once said. Only then are we in a position to show, for instance, that the extermination of a race, nation or class is sin against God and altogether incompatible with the universal and fundamental principles of justice. Only thus can we avoid the danger of filling the idea of justice and law with a variable content in accordance with a particular creed or dogma invented by men.

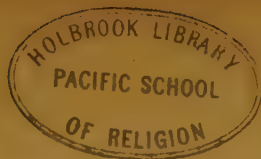
We now see clearly the vital issue at stake to-day. It is the same issue that was broached from another point of view in the Christian News-Letter of November 11th (C.N.L. No. 159); the question whether in the future basic and eternal Christian principles are going to control politics and to qualify and limit arbitrary and partisan political power, or whether politics are to be deified, and a new quasi-religious creed break up the life of man by undermining all the universal values of Western civilization. For Christians it is not surprising that the new kind of collective religion leads only to physical and spiritual tyranny and to the destruction of all basic values and principles. For the Christian realizes that the appearance of Christianity in history was the supreme revolutionary event which had a final and irrevocable effect also in the political sphere. From that time onwards the political order stands under the judgment of God. This development cannot be undone. The political order can no longer claim as in ancient times to be by its very nature in accord with true religion and ultimately with justice and the universal principles of law; it cannot claim of itself to be a just order and, by implication, to comply with the demands of divine justice.

THE CHURCH AND JUSTICE

We can now understand why the Church to-day feels herself called upon to defend the foundations of justice and law. In actual fact in the occupied countries, as in Germany, the fighting Church is to-day the only guardian of justice and law. In this capacity she fulfils a divine obligation and natural right. By her valiant stand she makes known to all the world that she is conscious of the religious and moral foundations of justice and law. She indicates herewith the direction from which justice and law on the Continent must be renewed. She is thus helping to prepare a time in which a renewed Church and regenerated theology will again speak with authority on the fundamentals of justice and law and their nature and function in human affairs.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



Christmas 1942

DEAR MEMBER,

Many of the traditional accompaniments of Christmas are this year denied us. The stripping away of some of the unessentials recalls us from the circumference to the centre, and confronts us more directly with the essential religious meaning of the celebration.

For many to-day that meaning has almost entirely evaporated. Others are uncertain and puzzled about the connection between the spirit of good fellowship, which they feel to be solid and real, and the seemingly remote source in which it has its origin. What have shepherds and angels to do with an age dominated by science and machines? And yet, the more we reflect on what took place at Christmas, the more it seems to be extraordinarily relevant to the actual situation of our time.

"ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY"

I take great comfort from the element of fact in Christianity. To many it has been a stumbling-block, but it brings me constant reassurance. A birth took place. A new force entered into the world. A life was lived that changed the course of history; that deepened immeasurably the meaning of love, gave the qualities of mercy and compassion a new place in the esteem of men, exalted womanhood and consecrated the child. That is plain historic fact.

The rise of Hitler from obscure nothingness to unprecedented power is to me inexplicable. I can understand in some degree the factors that brought it about, but taken together they do not resolve the mystery. Christmas recalls a greater miracle. The name of Christ after two thousand years is known throughout the world; even His enemies speak of this year as 1942.

And if the birth means all this, so also does the death. In it also we are confronted with irreducible fact. Christianity insists on this particularity. Pontius Pilate has a place in the creed; Christ suffered—not simply in general, but on a particular day, on a particular hill, by the order of a particular man. Christianity is not a beautiful theory nor a philosophy subject to the vicissitudes of changing modes of thought. It is an historic deed—an act woven into the texture of history and changing thereby its whole character. Whatever more it may be, it is at least that. The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, but it is not in their power to tear out of history a thing that has been done. To all time the deed stands.

THE CENTRE OF HISTORY

The more I ponder on these facts the less inclined I am to believe that their meaning and power are exhausted. To many generations in the west they have given a central meaning to history. The

significance of that meaning does not diminish but rather grows, when we face the practical decisions between which we have to choose to-day.

Paul Tillich is surely right in insisting that, if our small, transient lives are to have any real significance, there must be in history some central point in which its purpose and meaning are revealed. If there is no such centre, history is merely the senseless play of contending forces which ebb and flow, like the rival armies that have driven one another in turn across the Libyan desert. Human lives are no more than flotsam and jetsam on these tides, without traditions, without loyalties, without standards and without a goal. Our lives can have historical meaning only if we can identify them with some event or person or idea which claims to give meaning to the whole. What are the real choices open to us to-day? If Christ is not the meaning of history, where else may we look for it?

Can we find it in nationalism, which is one of the two great rivals of Christianity to-day? Its followers are far more numerous, and often show a greater devotion, than the followers of Christ. I do not want to discuss here the relation of loyalty to the nation to loyalty to Christ; every Christian will agree that up to a point loyalty to one's people is not only compatible with, but enjoined by, loyalty to Christ. But when the nation is presented to me as the supreme and sole end, and I am told that the meaning of history is found in increasing its wealth and power and making it supreme over other nations, my choice is clear. The meaning of history is not to be found in the worship of idols. That has been made for ever impossible by the coming into the world of the life whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. The meaning of history is there revealed in a life lived in complete

obedience to God and unwavering trust in Him, proclaiming that the ultimate significance of human life is found in the supremacy of the personal. The coming of Christ, if it does not compel, encourages us to believe that love is at least one of the deep meanings of the universe. These things are not easy to believe; but a tribal religion I know to be false. Along that road there is no future for mankind. Between nationalism and the Christian tradition I cannot hesitate. I take my stand, and with the stand comes a whole-hearted joy and thanksgiving that "unto us a Child is born."

The other great rival of Christianity is the religion of humanity in its endless variety of forms. Its followers, too, far outnumber Christians. It owes much to Christianity and in some of its forms at least shares many of its values. But in so far as man is the source of these values, I can find in it no sure foothold. Values that are merely human are irremediably tainted with arbitrariness. Liberty, justice, democracy, peace are causes to which many to-day pin their faith. But Nietzsche, who is a great and challenging figure, poured scorn on all of these. In cruder fashion, and consequently with far wider appeal, Hitler has called their authority in question. He is in part the embodiment, and in part the producer, of a crisis of values. The contagion of his example can hardly be exaggerated, in this country as well as in Germany. It is being said in some circles here, "See what a lot Hitler has got away with by making up his mind not to let anything stand in his way; what is to prevent us from getting away with what we want if we go all out for it?"

I have not spoken of Communism. This is a Christmas letter and not an attempt to diagnose our times. In the present context it perhaps is permissible to regard

Communism as one form of the religion of humanity, since it finds the whole meaning of man's life within human society.

What I have wanted to suggest is that the coming of Christ into the world has both given a central meaning to history and also in doing this made it clear that history *must* have a centre.

If Christ represents only the highest among human possibilities, He becomes subject to the arbitrariness attaching to everything human. It is against this danger that the Church has tried to guard in its assertion of the divinity of Christ. Whatever difficulty may be felt about this doctrine, the question is not an academic one, as many suppose, but central to the life of our time. It is the vital question whether our historic life has a centre that gives it meaning; and only the claim that that meaning is absolute, universal and final can save us from the quicksands of the relative and arbitrary.

You will tell me, perhaps, that I have spoken of decision and choice. What difference is there between choosing an ideal and choosing Christ? The difference is that in Christ an *historic reality* confronts me from which I cannot escape. I encounter my fate. I choose that which has already laid its grasp upon me.

THE DEEP WISDOM OF SALVATION

In the event of Christmas I find another meaning which expresses a deeper and richer wisdom than is to be found elsewhere. It is a wisdom to which the modern mind is astonishingly blind and obstinately resistant. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr in his Gifford Lectures delivered during the war has a devastating chapter on "The Easy Conscience of the Modern

Man." Complacency in regard to man and his powers is common to all modern systems of thought. It is the atmosphere we all breathe and we consequently seldom think about it. The striking thing is that man's optimism about himself is almost as unqualified in the midst of social chaos, war and reversion to barbarism as in the days when the world seemed stable and the hope of progress assured. In spite of manifest and disastrous failure, men are as confident as ever in their own ability to make a satisfactory world. It does not occur to them that there may be something wrong with themselves which frustrates their efforts. It is at this point that the gulf between Christianity and the modern temper is widest and deepest. The modern world is not interested in the Gospel because it feels no need of it.

I am under no illusions about the difficulty of bridging the gulf. A prodigious spiritual and intellectual effort is needed. The world opened up by science and the discipline of scientific thought must be brought within the scope of the Christian conception of man and his salvation. It is the knowledge that this has not yet been done that makes the presentation of the Gospel so often appear the childish *naïveté* of a pre-scientific age. We have also to demonstrate that faith in God does not lessen man's responsibility, but demands a more responsible exercise of his powers. But while achievements in science, technology and culture have a real splendour and are evidence of the remarkable capacities of human nature, the prevalent optimism about man rests on very insecure foundations. His present predicament is not the result of a temporary aberration, but the manifestation of something deeply rooted in his nature. The modern complacency is blind to the tragic possibilities of freedom, to the demonic power of self-interest, and to the fundamental disturbance of man's nature

through his separation from God in Whom alone he has his true being.

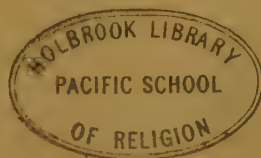
The optimistic view of man as a self-contained personality, master of his fate and captain of his soul, has been undermined by psychology and is hard to maintain in face of the events and experiences of to-day. We have the evidence before our eyes of the extent to which man's rational nature can be overwhelmed by the irruption of sinister forces of evil. There can be little hope for humanity unless our nature is also open on the other side to the visitations of grace. In proportion as men awaken to the fact that their life is exposed without protection to the threat of complete destruction, they will be the more ready to listen to a message which speaks to them of salvation. In the Christian interpretation of history, the meaning of world history is salvation, realized fragmentarily here and now, and in its fulness beyond history. It is the triumph of meaning over meaninglessness, the victory of creative achievement over the destructiveness of power (which is the framework and driving-force of his-

tory) through the progressive bringing of power into an absolute unity with love. It is from the deeds of Jesus Christ that this profound conception springs. As we surrender ourselves to its vitalizing power we respond with the deepest joy to the Christmas announcement, "There is born to you this day a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord."

It makes all the difference to our hopes for the future if we believe that the power that can redeem the world has already entered into history; that the primary thing in Christianity is not that it makes a demand on us, but that it brings us the good news of fulfilment. It is the great weakness of much of our Christianity that it reverses this order and puts all the emphasis on what we ought to do, not on what has been done for us. Our first concern is not so much to spur ourselves, or to exhort others, to greater efforts, as to allow ourselves to become more aware of the realm of grace and to be more fully possessed by its power.

I wish you a very happy Christmas.

J. H. OLDHAM



All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



CONCERNING PRAYER

By DANIEL JENKINS

All Christians are being asked next month to take part in two great corporate acts of prayer, the Universal Week of Prayer and the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity. Many will feel it to be their duty to make a response, but perhaps there will also be many who will be somewhat embarrassed by the request. We may all agree that prayer is the very heart of the Christian life and, indeed, that no man can be a Christian who does not pray; but there are multitudes of us who have to confess that prayer is not the vital and urgent thing in our lives which we know it should be, and who cannot honestly feel, for example, that it matters very much whether we take part in these two acts of prayer or not.

THE PRISON-HOUSE OF SELF

These difficulties are not entirely due to intellectual confusion—"how can God alter the laws of nature at my behest?"—or to lack of training and discipline in the practice of prayer. These are, of course, often hindrances in individual cases, but hindrances which in themselves simple instruction can soon put right. The trouble lies much deeper. Our whole spiritual attitude is involved in it, and our lesser difficulties about prayer are but the symptoms of something seriously wrong at that level. We live in the twentieth century, a time when men have largely lost their awareness of a whole dimension of reality, the dimension of what the Bible calls *mystery*. It is not so much our materialism, in the loose popular sense, which is our difficulty, as our subjectivism. We are trapped in the prison-house of ourselves and, despite our best efforts, we have lost the contact our fathers had with the world outside themselves, where they had their own definite place and which was more real and enduring than their own thoughts and feelings about it. We have lost the gift of meeting other persons face to face, and above all the absolute Person, God, and we console ourselves instead with *experience*, the messages He and they sometimes manage to get through into our prison.

Prayer seems, therefore, to be an exceptionally difficult thing to those who are sensitive to the climate of our age. It means a radical break with all the natural tendencies of their lives. But the realization of its difficulty may turn out to be a blessing, especially in this time when, as we shall see, so many people have a falsely simple attitude towards it, if it helps us to examine afresh the whole question of its nature and see again how strange and even miraculous it is. For the first truth about Christian prayer is not that it is difficult, but that it is impossible. How can I, believing as I do that essentially I am the centre of my own universe and the being for whom it primarily exists, call upon Another as the only source of my life, as my strength and my Deliverer? And remember, it has to be a *real* calling upon Him if it is to be true prayer at all. He knows the secret intents of our hearts and He is not deceived by the infinite subtlety of the Evil One who can twist even our prayers to lead us into damnation. Prayer which is real prayer, a breaking-out from the prison-house of ourselves and a committing of ourselves and of the world in which we are set to God as the only Author and Disposer, is impossible, in the same way as faith is from our human side impossible. Faith means the acknowledgement that we are not the masters of our own lives, and that our only salvation consists in casting ourselves upon God in Jesus Christ and allowing Him to reign in us. Since that goes against the deepest inclinations of our sinful, rebellious natures it is, from our human side, completely impossible and can only happen through a miracle of God's grace wrought in us. Prayer is faith in action and, therefore, it can only happen when God performs a miracle in us.

THE RELATION OF PRAYER TO FAITH

We can now see the reason for our modern embarrassment about prayer. It is two-fold. Firstly, we quite simply often lack a clear grasp of what faith means and, therefore,

cannot make the spiritual effort of moving out of our self-centred world into the real world where we meet God and know His power. It would indeed be strange if the decline of religion and the theological confusion which have until recently been so apparent in other spheres were not present also in this central sphere of the Church's life. But secondly, we are embarrassed because we often feel that much of our prayer is not really faith in action, and because much modern talk about prayer seems to imply that prayer is an activity efficacious in itself, almost without reference to the miracle of faith in the serious Biblical sense at all. This is, of course, especially clear in war time, when people are in great straits and naturally concerned to use every means they can of helping the persons and causes they hold dear. National Days of Prayer may be excellent institutions, but many who take part in prayer on those days and look most expectantly for results can hardly be said conspicuously to manifest the fruits of faith in other directions. Likewise, the intention of those advertisements in tube stations exhorting us to pray for victory is unexceptionable, but they often encourage the idea that prayer is a self-generating power whose efficacy is limited only by its quantity. But this belief is by no means peculiar to war time. For some time now it has been fashionable for scholars and preachers to regard prayer as a common human activity. They have even spoken of it as a natural instinct, universal in man, and needing only to be released from unnatural inhibitions to achieve perfect expression, while in their appeals to men to practise it they have passed lightly over its distinctive Christian connection with faith. The result has been that frequently prayer has been transformed—even more thoroughly than any other aspect of the Christian life—into something commonplace and trivial; so that man's most solemn and responsible act, his calling upon the name of the Lord, has become "talking with God" or "tuning in to the infinite," the easiest and least exacting and most futile practice in the world.

DESPAIR OF SELF

Christian prayer is impossible apart from faith. And faith means acknowledging that in ourselves we are powerless to master even our own lives, let alone those of others, and that our only hope is to cast ourselves upon God in Christ and to commit others to His

care. Despair of self is the presupposition of all prayer, and unless we know it then our prayer is all that the unbeliever says it is, a pathetic conversation with our own selves. So far from being easy-going intercourse with an indulgent modern parent, it can only arise when it is wrung out of a penitent heart, driven to acknowledge its impotence in a world which lies in the power of the Evil One. This is not to say that there is no prayer except petition and intercession, but it is to say that despair of self and acknowledgement of God as alone the Master of our lives is involved in all prayer, even in the simplest grace before meat. It is the preacher who is failing in his ministry and finding that his words are not reaching men's hearts and changing their lives, or the statesman who sees that whichever way he turns he is bound to do evil, or the woman who knows with agony of heart that there is literally nothing she can do for her lover in peril or temptation except to commend him to God's safe keeping, who is in a position to learn what it is really to pray. For they are driven by their love to see that their own ability to help their fellows apart from God is an illusion, and that He alone is their sufficiency and their Deliverer.

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

It is this prayer which arises out of self-despair which can alone be effective prayer. For it will no longer be our prayer, but that of Jesus Christ in us. We shall be dead, and it will be no longer we who live, but He in us. Our prayers, then, will be part of His High Priestly prayer in which, through His incarnation and death, He intercedes as our representative before the Father, and they will prevail with Him. To say that prayer is faith in action means nothing less than this, for faith is despair of ourselves and finding our humanity anew in the humanity of Jesus Christ. This is the point of St. Paul's insistence, to which in practice we often fail to give any concrete meaning, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Prayer is intercourse with God, as of one person with another; but who are we, sinful and unbelieving as we are, that we should hold personal intercourse with God? We can do so only as we are found in Jesus Christ, through Whom alone we enjoy the fulness of personal responsibility and, therefore, the ability to enjoy personal relations with God. Apart from Him, however great our spirituality,

God becomes an impersonal Object and our prayer the same as addressing an idol of wood or stone.

Prayer which is offered in Jesus Christ must prevail, for it partakes of His own creative and redemptive power. It is part of His intercession for the world before the Father, and with the sacrifice of the Son the Father is well-pleased. Our prayers then become through Him His own will, nothing less than a veritable Word of the Lord, and the Word of the Lord does not return unto Him void, but prospers in the thing whereto He sent it.

It is only in this setting that we can find the answer to the familiar question, "Why should God need my prayers for things which He is going to do anyway?" They are necessary for the same reason as the incarnation, humiliation and death of Christ were necessary, for prayer is precisely "the fellowship of His sufferings," the making up that which was lacking in His sufferings by giving particular content, as members of His Body, to His eternal intercession before the Father. And we know that the mysterious economy of salvation was necessary because that was the only way in which He could save us, if He was to treat sin with adequate seriousness and yet retain His own Lordship and our own existence as responsible persons.

Prayer which is in faith is, therefore, invincible; but that is not to say we have any right to "lose our faith" when prayer appears to be unanswered. For the question must always remain an open one from our human side, "Is it truly prayer in faith?" And there are certain conditions necessary if prayer is to be faithful prayer which we have frequently disregarded in modern times and which largely account for the widespread disbelief in its power.

THE CONDITIONS OF FAITHFUL PRAYER

Firstly, true Christian prayer always takes place within the Church and is always on behalf of the Church. This must be so just because it is joined to the High Priestly prayer of Christ, "Who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing, but holy and without blemish." We must believe that the life of the Church, in its fundamental sense as the Body of Christ in the world, is the true life of the world, and prayer which is not offered in the context of the whole life of the Body and with a realization of the needs

of the whole Body, whether the one who prays is a member of the visible fellowship or not, is not prayer at all. This is not the presumptuous sin of prejudging the validity of the prayers of others, as though we were God: it is simply to state one of the fundamental laws of prayer without which it does not make sense. Unless, as we pray for those we love amidst the hazards of war, we see them in the light of Christ's redeeming work and His purpose for His whole Body, how can we pray in any recognizably Christian sense for their safety? How, apart from this, are we able to understand in what their safety consists?

Secondly, Christian prayer is never "free" prayer, the pouring forth without let or hindrance of the sincerest longings of our hearts, as the theological romanticism of the last hundred and fifty years has sometimes maintained. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Prayer which is answered is always, as we have seen, prayer in the Spirit. And it is the Spirit alone which ensures that it is the new "spiritual" man who is praying and not the old "carnal" man who knows not the things of God. And once more, the Spirit is not another name for our highest aspirations, but the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ as the Scriptures declare Him and as the Church throughout the ages has testified to Him. True prayer is, therefore, pre-eminently Biblical prayer, the prayer of those whose home is the world of the Bible and who daily hear God speaking to them from it. Perhaps the chief reason why the prayers even of those of us who call ourselves believers are often so weak and impoverished is that we do not seek the means of grace—in Scripture, in Word and in Sacrament—constantly enough, so that our knowledge of God is shallow and we never penetrate to the secret places of the most High where the unfailing springs of eternal life are to be found.

Thirdly, and even more strangely to our modern way of thinking, Christian prayer always looks forward to the great Day of the Lord of which the Bible speaks. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is not a pious hope. It is a cry of confident looking forward to the day when all true prayers will be answered, when the High Priestly work of Christ will be finally established on earth as it is in heaven, and when all the kingdoms of the world shall stand finally revealed as the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. It is that confidence

which is the ground of our belief in the effectiveness of any prayer we offer for a temporal mercy. "Give us this day our daily bread, that we may be sustained unto that glorious day which is to come. Forgive us our trespasses, lest we be blotted out by the fire of Thy wrath before that Day. Lead us not into temptations, lest we be found like the foolish virgins when at midnight comes the cry, Protect those we love in danger, that they may be preserved to greet Thee at that Day or may have further space for repentance before that Day. Give peace to the world, that it may be maintained in order and tranquillity unto that Day." Thus we see that all prayer turns upon this hope, and we need to be reminded that unless our very prayers for victory in this war are set in the light of the judgment and promise of God's final reign of peace and righteousness they will not rise higher than the roofs of our temples.

It is only when these conditions are fulfilled that our prayers are real and effective. The main difficulties about prayer are not those we usually think of—how to find time for it in the rush of modern life, or how to square it with a scientific interpretation of the universe. Surely our whole approach is already completely secularized when we think of it in those terms. For the serious Christian the chief difficulties lie on the Godward side, not the manward, and the relevant question is whether God will condescend to hear our prayers and of His grace answer them, for it is He who is God and we wait upon Him and not He upon us. But the question is

answered, for our Lord Himself has taught us how to pray. If then the Christian knows the true adoption of sonship he will have no difficulty in crying "Abba, Father," and in pouring out his soul in thanksgiving and petition and intercession for Christ's Body in the world. And if he is seriously living the Christian life, waiting upon the appointed means of grace, facing the perplexities and impossible obstacles of this world, knowing the mercies and deliverances which the Lord grants daily, then maintaining the earnestness and regularity of his prayers will not be a problem for him, but he will constantly be driven to his knees.

The world does indeed need prayer more than anything else. For prayer is effective power. It is, first and last, the prayer of Jesus Christ, and it must prevail as He must prevail. It does make a difference to what happens, because He makes a difference to what happens. The world needs Him and, therefore, the world needs our prayers. But prayer is faith in action, and thus the only way to a renewal of prayer is a renewal of faith. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities : but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



WAR AND THE FAMILY

By KATHLEEN BLISS

Wars bring social changes on a major scale—some temporary, some permanent, some good, some bad, and of all the units in society the family suffers most violent upheaval and shows most resilience in reasserting itself. Some changes are common to all modern wars. Fathers are removed from home and mothers are left to play the rôle of both parents. Family incomes suffer considerable changes and social habits change with them. There are early marriages and hasty marriages (not necessarily the same thing). There are estrangements and losses which are final; younger widows, more only children, more fatherless families. But while war is destroying family life, it is also in other ways reinforcing the instinct for it. To thousands of young men and women who took their homes for granted, casually and often critically, to get back home again now becomes the most desirable fruit of victory.

This war has brought some changes which seem to me to be without parallel in the history of our country. Never has there been such widespread destruction of the visible fabric of our homes or such considerable redistribution of our population. A hundred thousand families are living in houses which were condemned before the war. For the first time compulsion to join the armed forces has been applied to women, and many have been uprooted from their homes to live a totally different life in community in the Services. The evacuation of hundreds of thousands of children has not only divided homes—most of them only temporarily—but it has also given many children a taste of another kind of life, and many foster-parents a quite unnerving insight into the way in which "the other nation" lives.

WOMEN IN WAR WORK

But probably no change has created such concern as the large-scale enlistment of married women into industry. On December

2nd, 1941, Mr. Bevin said in the House of Commons: "... it is in this great field of married women or women doing necessary household work, comprising about eleven million persons, that we see our largest reserves for industry and home defence for the future." Everything possible has been done by advertisement and by the inducement of good wages to encourage women to enter industry, and they have been not only encouraged but enabled to do so. Since the outbreak of war nearly two thousand day nurseries have been set up to care for the children of women war workers. Communal restaurants and an immensely enlarged school meal service set married women free from cooking and shopping. More significant than that the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education have opened so many day nurseries in so short a time and aim at five thousand as their target, is the fact that most of them have waiting lists. Without compulsion married women are eager to work, and in order that they may be able to do so are willing to hand the care of their children to others. They have made, in the words of the Chief Inspector of Factories, a "tremendous sacrifice . . . in accepting what amounts to a destruction of their home life."¹

A small minority of married women go out to work even in peace time, especially in the cotton and hosiery industries. Their family budgets are based on an assumption of both parents earning. Many working women would never have a penny of their own if they did not earn it. The war has brought to a far larger number of women a new pressure to work. Some are moved by patriotism; some urgently need to bridge the gap between pre-war income and service allowances; others are bored because their children are evacuated; others want extra money and enjoy change. Even so, we must look much farther back than 1939 to explain the readiness of the response. Over the last thirty

¹ Annual Report for 1941 of the Chief Inspector of Factories.

years the nation has slowly but emphatically decided against large families and in favour of limitation. There has also been a steady change in our conception of the married woman's function. Many professional women have successfully challenged the view that a woman should abandon her vocation when she marries, and many young couples regard marriage as a working partnership in which each carries on his or her previous job. The home has become a part-time and often a secondary job. Meanwhile, those who have labour-saving devices to sell have never failed to emphasize that domestic work is dreary and unnecessary, to be hurried through in order that women may enjoy real life outside the home. Mr. Bevin launched his boats on a running tide.

THE CHILDREN OF WORKING MOTHERS

What is the effect of this on the children and on the families? No one who looks at the Board of Education's latest publication, *Not Yet Five*,¹ with its pictures of toddlers at their play, their meals, their rest, can doubt that—although thousands of children are deprived of much that makes a complete home life—they are gaining training in good habits, good regular meals and the companionship of other children, with all its character-forming give-and-take which many of them would not find in their homes. Even if only a few of the nurseries come up to the standard here photographed, and even if some of them deserve the criticisms which are piled upon them by those people whose acquaintance with them from inside is not always certain, it would seem to be lack of sufficient staff of the right kind and the pressure of speed, rather than lack of desire to make the best possible use of this great educational opportunity, which is responsible for defects. The day nurseries can be visited and many of them need and make use of voluntary help on a part-time basis.

But what of the older children? Here a far greater and more well-informed uneasiness is expressed. One school teacher writes of the increasing number of seven and eight-year-olds in her class in an elementary school in the North who come to school with the latch-key on a string round their necks and let themselves into the house alone. A headmistress of a senior girls' school writes that a large proportion of her girls of twelve to

fourteen do all the family shopping and cooking, and are largely responsible for the care of younger brothers and sisters, while they themselves come to school in clothes that are seldom washed and never mended. Another teacher reports the increasing number of cases of neglect taken up by the N.S.P.C.C., and yet another quotes the remark of a policeman father that it "comes expensive sending the kids to the pictures every night while mother's at work, but at least you do know where they are."

Meanwhile, magistrates in juvenile courts survey with anxiety the ever-increasing number of juvenile delinquents and comment with almost monotonous frequency on the decline of parental control and absence of home discipline. War puts adventure and daredevilry at a premium, and the forces which could direct and control them are removed to the front line and the factory. These are the children who will have to sustain the new order. Some are learning young to shoulder responsibility; others are suffering neglect.

FAMILY AND STATE

The State has stretched out a long arm over the family, and many are expressing anxiety about the extent to which it is assuming the care and training of the young. This is only natural: it is indeed one of the things about which we are fighting. Opinions are divided. There are those who see in every state-provided facility, from day nurseries to the Service of Youth, the sinister beginnings of totalitarianism. There are others, including a certain type of parent, who regard it as the State's job, through the school, to teach the children everything from carpentry to speaking the truth and from geography to sex, and who blame the school for every failure. There is an undoubted tension. The days when parents could "do what they liked with their own" are gone. Their children are also the nation's children, and as such they deserve the best that the nation has to give. The right of the State to compel and to punish cruel and neglectful parents, and even to deprive them of their children, is not seriously questioned. The issue is not over the compulsion of the small minority: it is over the State provision of facilities for the majority. Are school meals, free milk, free medical care, day nurseries and the rest encouraging parents to shake off the responsibility of their children

¹ H.M. Stationery Office. 3d.

and to regard them as the State's responsibility?

I think that on the whole Christian people allow their attention to be fixed too exclusively on one aspect of the State's activities in relation to the family—this provision of facilities. We are not nearly so anxiously on the watch when the State takes action which by outward semblance reverses this process and forces the family to look after itself. How many of us realized at the time the disastrous effects which the means test had upon family life? Here the State treated the family as an indivisible economic unit; but the effect was to disrupt it, for unemployed fathers were reduced to dependence even for pocket money on their sixteen-year-old sons and daughters earning easy money in dead-end jobs. Parental control in such conditions was an impossibility. Responsibility can only be exercised by those who control the physical means by which it operates.

WHERE DOES RESPONSIBILITY REST?

There is one person in society who has no doubts about it. Ask the child. It is from his parents that he expects to receive what he needs of physical provision, protection and love. It is to them that he gives his unswerving loyalty. Whatever he may learn at school, it is his home background which forms habits and conditions belief. It is this inborn and seemingly ineradicable reliance of the child upon his parents which places the ultimate responsibility for children upon them. "It is pitiable," says R. G. Collingwood in *The New Leviathan*,¹ "to see men who have 'devoted their lives to education' struggling against overwhelming odds to run schools in such a way that in favourable cases, and granted exceptionable ability on their own part, they can excite in pupils a very small fraction of the enthusiasm and the self-confidence that any ordinary parent can excite in his own very ordinary children by taking hardly any trouble at all..." Social workers and teachers will endorse the truth of Mr. John Watson's remark in his book *The Child and the Magistrate*,² that this is true even of undesirable parents: "Strange as it may seem, except in cases of deliberate cruelty, children who have been ill-treated or neglected seldom shrink from those who have caused them so much suffering. On the contrary, and little as the parents deserve it, it is pathetic to see how they cling to them—

especially those children who have been already removed from home—as to the one thing which appears to them stable in a world which is tumbling about their ears."

There is a point in some children's careers at which the State is at pains to make explicit the responsibility of parents for the moral training and discipline of their children—that is when they appear before a juvenile court. Then it is made clear to them, and then the probation officer puts himself alongside parents and child to help in the right exercise of that responsibility. But why do we wait till this stage is reached? Are there not points short of the court at which the State can appear as the assistant of the parents in fulfilling their task? Reports on the future of education are being poured forth at this moment. Many of them do not mention the home: some have a few high-sounding phrases on its supreme importance, and pass to the administrative machinery of education. We still await the report which envisages a partnership between home and school, which sees that parents have much to learn and to teach, and suggests the machinery for making it possible. Parents' associations are increasing in numbers and interest; but they are not enough, and they hold no responsibility.

WHAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED OF PARENTS?

We do not expect enough from the parents in the education of their children. They are, all of them by now, products of that very system of education through which their children are passing. Yet they are often treated very much as the first generation of parents to be compelled to send their children to school, from whom resistance was the expected reaction. There may perhaps be an amazing opportunity in nursery schools after the war, if it can be rightly imagined and seized upon. Here one is dealing with the youngest parents, the most idealistic and most willing to learn; and a new type of teacher, trained in a less stereotyped fashion, might enter into a relationship with these young parents of supreme educative value alike for teacher, parents and child. This is one thing worth snatching from the present war-time improvisations.

But if we have expected too little from parents in some respects, in others perhaps we have expected too much. Society as a whole sets standards of expenditure on

¹ Oxford University Press, 35s.

² Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.

children—in clothes, food, education—conformity to which demands most drastic rationing of babies. Besides asking parents to make enormous financial sacrifices for their children, we expect a mother to be a vitamin-haunted dietician and a skilled psychologist.

Does home-making and the rearing of a family really consist in lavish expenditure and a high degree of specialist skill? I like the little girl who, in an essay on school dinners, wrote: "Mothers don't know all about vitamins—it isn't their job to." Our craze for scientific knowledge and our valuation of every object in terms of money and of every skill in terms of its rarity (so that to make a break of 1,000 at billiards is much cleverer than bathing a wriggling, soapy baby) have us by the throat.

In a fascinating little book called *Their Side of the Story*,¹ John Vardy, headmaster of a Home Office school for delinquent children, summarizes the answers to questions which he put to his boys. He asked them how many hot cooked meals a week they had, how many baths, whether they had any regular bed-time, how many times a week they went to the cinema, what hobbies their fathers had. The picture which these replies make is of a disordered and haphazard life in homes on which nobody lavished any care. Discipline in the home is not some complicated system of law and order, of rules and regulations, but something very simple. Regularity, tidiness and order, a sense of the supreme importance of human relationships expressed in small things—these are the foundations of disciplined home life demanding for their exercise both devotion and acquired skill.

AFTER THE WAR

Thousands of women will be returning to their homes after the war. Many will turn with relief from a life of machines and monotonous tasks to a life made up mostly of personal relations; but how many will think of home-making as a skill and a vocation? When a married woman is out at work she has an independent monetary reward for her services, and she is insured against accident and illness. At home she is unpaid and uninsured. This suggests that home-making is not "work" and that tending a machine establishes a claim on society while caring for children does not. The proposals of the Beveridge Report may, if implemented, change the whole economic status of married women; but no economic adjustments can evoke that sense of vocation which is the real root of doing anything well.

Living in India, where the Christian homes stand out against the dark background of a non-Christian society, made me realize that however much they may have been overlaid and forgotten, the foundations of family life in this country are Christian. Parenthood is "vocation" in the Christian sense of a calling by God, Himself the Father. The Church has at least two means by which men and women can be enabled to rediscover these foundations. First, no person in society has so intimate a knowledge of the home life of this country as the parson who is truly a pastor. Secondly, if the individual congregation is what it ought to be, it is itself a family of families wherein each family finds not only its support but the fulfilment of its own life in worship and service.

¹ Guardian Press, Newton-le-Willows, 2s. 6d.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

By His Excellency PROFESSOR DR. GERBRANDY, Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Neither the history of Europe nor that of the United States of America would be comprehensible should we try to eliminate from it Christianity and Christian tradition. In many of our institutions in the realm of government, trade and culture—unlike those of such countries as Japan, China and India—we can trace the influence of some branch of the Christian Church, of the exertions of pious students of public law, and of the practical Christian way of life of leading men in all fields of labour. The state's recognition of Sunday as the official day of rest was born out of the creed of the Christian Church that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and that therefore everyone must be freed of daily cares to celebrate this day as the festival of Christianity. The idea behind the word "constitution" which we use daily is a conception reached through great spiritual exertion by Christian thinkers of the sixteenth century. The history of our modern industrial relations goes back through the centuries to that long struggle in which, through the practical application of a Christian way of life, a natural relationship of free men was born out of serfdom.

Of course I am aware that influences other than Christianity have nourished European and American civilization: for instance, in the Middle Ages, Hellenism, originating in a world in which two-thirds of the population were slaves, and at the end of the Middle Ages, Humanism, a philosophical trend of thought which made man himself the measure and final aim of society. More important, towards the end of the seventeenth century, less than two hundred years after the revival of Christianity through the Reformation in the sixteenth century, a breaking away of society from clerical and divine authority started, which is evident to-day in a growing degree.

But this does not mean that Christianity and European society are no longer bound together. The policy of the Netherlands towards the Netherlands East Indies, which discarded the idea that they are an exploitable colonial territory and elevated them to

constitutionally equal parts of the kingdom ruled in their own interests, has been fertilized by the conviction expressed in our Parliament and in the programmes of our political parties that the Christian mission required it. In the Netherlands there are three influential political parties which in their official programmes openly declare that no healthy policy is possible without the recognition of the sovereignty of God and the Kingdom of Christ. For millions in the Netherlands political activity is an expression of their will to serve God.

The doctrine that politics and Christianity are separate has been put forward especially by German and Italian thinkers.

The whole world is now in distress. We feel as though mankind is crossing an ocean of gigantic waves, and in that anxious voyage the human soul cries out: "Is it then true, after all, that only Christianity can cure politics and economics? Even though Christians have often been as savourless salt, has not Christianity been of the greatest blessing to our ancestors? What does Christianity offer for the politics of our time?" That question is the subject of my address.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

But I am faced with a difficulty when speaking to an unknown English audience, a difficulty which lies not in the word "politics," but in the word "Christianity."

When I drive through your towns and villages I see many churches of different denominations: Church of England, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and so on. Judged by the variety of its churches, Christianity in England does not seem to cover one general notion. What shall I do? I propose to speak about Christianity as it was before these churches; before pope, priest or divine minister; before the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury existed, when there was only one Christian, Christ Himself. Do you agree with me that this is pure Christianity? I go back to

the source of all Churches, sects and Christians : Jesus Christ.

Him we know only through the Bible, especially through the New Testament. Everything that has been thought or said about Him outside the Bible is vain fantasy.

We find the essence of the message of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The fifth chapter of St. Matthew ends with these words : " Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." That does not sound like politics, for politics have to do with such things as compulsion, punishment, executions, battles and wars. The sixth chapter ends with these words : " Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." That sounds bad economics, for economics call for careful long-term planning. The seventh chapter ends with the warning that he who disregards these unpolitical and uneconomic commands is like a fool who builds his house on sand, so that rain and storm undermine and destroy it. The great Russian author and thinker, Leo Tolstoy, stopped at the Sermon on the Mount and passed to a life devoid of politics and economics.

Christ did not stop there. When nearly everyone turned away from Him, and when His message and the everyday life of the state appeared irreconcilable, He took upon Himself to bridge the gap with the sacrifice of His own life. The perfect man, Jesus, who always returned evil with good, who went to cure the lepers in their horrible camps, who always loved His neighbour as Himself and God His maker above all, took upon Himself the punishment for all man's evil as though He had committed that evil Himself. There He hung at Calvary abandoned by God Himself, weighed down with our evil, with the shame of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the arrogance of Babel and Rome, with the iniquity of Heydrich and Hitler, with your sin and mine. God accepted that sacrifice, awakened Him from the dead on the first day of the week, and gave to the risen man Jesus all power in heaven and earth. The chasm was bridged. " Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

From that moment the way was opened up to unity between the imperfect world of politics and economics and the Kingdom of Heaven. Sovereignty and political economy will remain, but they can and will now be nourished by the message of Christ which

can only be understood in the light of His sacrifice. The history of the Netherlands and of the British Empire can be looked at from this angle, although you must not expect the bond between Christianity and history to be revealed in a scientific test. To use the words of the New Testament, Christianity works like leaven. It escapes exact argumentation.

We must take heed not to regard Christianity as morals, as directions for a moral way of life. Of course the Sermon on the Mount is ethics, God's ethics, but it is ethics which allows for the fact that this wicked world cannot fulfil the Christian command and has, therefore, to cling to the Cross. On the other hand the Cross, or rather the Crucified Himself, is a dynamic impulse to Christian action ; is, if I may say so, a pioneer in ethical sense.

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE AND FREEDOM

Jesus has always admitted political power, and approved of economic order ; but, as was evident at Golgotha, He puts one thing above all : obedience to His heavenly Father. He was there as a sign that loyalty and faith in God, contrary to the popular belief of those days, are neither subject to the authority of the Sanhedrin of the Jews, nor to the power of the Procurator Pontius Pilate, representative of the almighty Caesar.

Jesus' disciples went out into the world with that impulse, and have sealed their conviction that faith is independent of earthly power by revealing to the world the same freedom as did their Master, by having the courage to sacrifice their lives when worldly power demands that they disobey their Master. In so doing they opened Europe's eyes to the great truth that *all* life can be free if *that* principle is accepted. This has led gradually to freedom of thought, of the spoken and written word, of education, of industry and profession, to a free people in a free continent. Freedom not in the sense of doing as one likes, but of having the courage to do the Master's will : in thought only to seek after the truth ; in writing and speaking to voice only honest Christian enlightenment ; in education to fashion the child first of all as a subject of God, well furnished unto all good works ; in profession and trade to devise a combination in which master and servant work proudly together ; in international life to give the small states a chance to follow their own mission in the world.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

While all this was growing up, political power and economic order were not cast aside. Both were permeated, however feebly, by the spirit of Christianity, and so of Christ who commands that the Kingdom of Heaven shall take precedence over all.

Ours is an imperfect world in which the road to freedom and prosperity is closed unless politics and economics are bound to the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Cross. That is the root of our so-called Christian civilization. Germany has broken away from this root. We can see the result. Were we to do the same, even in another way, we should fare no better.

When you are asked what is the matter to-day, I am sure that most of you answer: "Mussolini, Hitler, and their gang." To put the blame on somebody else is never the answer of Christianity. Christianity unmasks us, and says outright that it is our fault. Our present predicament condemns our political, military and economic strategy of the past.

Superficial reformers are now boasting of the building of a new world. But the architect of our world is God, who only accepts our help according to His plan. Research and meditation have taught us beyond doubt that man does not make history, that man can only play a part of benefit to the world if, with his limited vision, he humbly tries to advise and act to the best of his abilities within the framework of the happenings of the world. In that framework we were at the stage, and still are, when no individual nation, certainly no small nation, can fulfil alone its first and foremost duty: to hold its own in order to allow its people to follow their self-chosen mission.

A gigantic problem faces us: Europe. The core of this problem is Germany. It can only be solved if our statesmen have the courage to bridge the gap between ideal and reality by making sacrifices; if we accept war as an instrument of law; if we are conscious that an ideal which theoretically can be adapted to the whole world can only be practised among those peoples in whose souls and spirits there is something of the Christian ideal and in whose culture Christianity has become an element. It is doubtful whether the Kingdom of the Netherlands or the British Empire can rise again out of trouble and humiliation if Christ is again left outside the deliberations of statesmen, outside the council chambers of the peace conference.

THE ECONOMIC ORDER

When we think of our economic system our hearts swell with pride. There is a word which expresses that pride: progress. I am sure that many people think of progress as a hot bath in the morning (which one half per cent of mankind can afford), as a radio set (which on the Continent now tells more lies than truths to millions of listeners), as a conveyor belt in factories (where parts of furniture, aeroplanes, tanks, etc., are made by people who spend their days repeating the same simple operation so that all joy in labour is stamped out), as comfort (which one in ten thousand can afford), as high speed cars, as toothbrushes, as permanent waves, as cinemas.

We people of the twentieth century do not immediately connect the idea of progress with a life enriched by the knowledge of our God and Creator; with a family warmed by the joy of living; with a feeling for beauty in nature and art—all things of more real importance than the appliances of modern science.

There is one method of approach to the development of our economic life which gives a very plausible explanation.

In the days of the guilds the chief characteristic of trade was that work was done to order direct from the buyer. The prices of finished goods, of raw materials, of labour were all fixed and no capital equipment in the sense we know it to-day was needed. As the markets widened with the development of communications, capital came to play a more important rôle, and the banks became money lenders to industry even before the ban on interest was lifted. Markets widened still further until to-day we have a world market with world-wide quotations, and a world banking system. The discovery of gold and silver in America and the loosening of the ties of scholasticism aided this development; so that in the nineteenth century we had a world in which the buyer and seller of goods and labour each had their individual price, and contact between sellers and buyers, employers and workers, was only established when they needed each other, and broken off when it was no longer necessary.

But the world still moved on and enormous business concerns (states within states) arose which based their prices on scientifically controlled and calculated costs, and strove for control over supply and demand. At the same time, however, a powerful trade union movement developed, coupled with one of

the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century, the introduction of British labour legislation on the Continent. Finally, this growing autarchy and the uncontrolled production of capital goods led us into the quagmire of large-scale unemployment, from which *we* will have to wrestle ourselves free.

Certainly, this has to be done. From the world of labour the hoarse cry reaches us: "We won't put up with it any longer." You and I are well aware that this cry has received a tremendous impetus from the absorption of each one of us in all kinds of war work.

But don't suppose that this rough outline of our economic development is by any means complete, for it was not only economic development which had to adapt itself to a growing population and increasing international trade.

The old economic order had two essential characteristics: first, responsibility of the political power for trade and commerce, not in creating regulations, but in backing up those of the organizations; secondly, a fixed standard for wages, profits, interest, price—a *justum pretium*. Here was the noble union that Christianity made with the world of labour. This union was never completely broken, and the cry of to-day can be interpreted as: "Give us back this union in new forms applicable to-day."

The great significance of Christianity is precisely that it offers a helping hand to us in this muddle, when we rightly comprehend the intrinsic forces of life. I had the invaluable privilege of observing this process. I have the profoundest respect for the studies of British authors on this subject. I am convinced that we will find a way out if only we realize in this respect too the imperfect character, the

wolflike nature of our modern industrial life, in which the bond with Christ's ethics can only be provided by responsible people who have the courage, if need be, to sacrifice themselves first, and who maintain their conviction that building according to the design of our great architect, who is God, requires more than the making of plans; it requires above all deeds of devotion in heart and spirit.

And so I come to this conclusion: our political and economic life yearn for Christianity, for Christ, as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks. Never perhaps in history has Christianity had an opportunity like this. May all Christians realize it! Christ is always ready to offer Himself, just as much to-day as ever. But one thing is foreign in Christ and Christianity, and it is this that makes it the opposite of Communism; they do not know compulsion.

Christianity and Christ appeal to free men, created in God's image, free to choose, and Christianity offers them everything if they choose Christ. He only warns us: "If you choose against Me you will find out who I am. I am the Son of God, come to Mine own, and without Me not anything is made that was made. If you reject Me, you will smash yourself against the eternal order of God Himself, who has given everything into My hands. That is the way I rule in contrast to all other rulers." It is as if we hear to-day Jesus' warning, melancholy exclamation about His own chosen people when He foresaw the unspeakable sorrow which would befall that people through their rejection of Him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. . . ."

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE

By MASS-OBSERVATION *

I. RELIGIOUS ALIGNMENTS TO-DAY

The facts reported here are the facts of to-day. Public and private opinion on religion, as on any other subject, may swing rapidly in another direction given the right stimulus, leadership and action. The considerable apathy about religion which exists now is a negative one, based mainly on past disappointments and past inactions. There is little positive hostility, but also few positive optimistic expectations, much disinterest. On the other hand, there is a widespread *desire* for religion to take a bigger part in the life of the community, a common goodwill and tolerance towards religious faith and inspiration, which needs (and often consciously wants) some definite sign that organized religion is in fact determined to play a better and more active part in social life before it can change from goodwill to participation. This article outlines the present state of religious faith and alignment, and describes briefly what people feel they want and will get from religion in the future.

Beliefs

If people are asked what their own religious beliefs are, about one in five say they have none. Younger people (under forty years) say they have no religion nearly twice as often as older people (forty years and over), and men more than twice as often as women. The rest are almost equally divided into two-fifths who say they belong to an organized church or sect and two-fifths who express faith in some sort of personal, unaffiliated religion.

Most of the first group make no comment beyond saying the name of the Church to which they belong. Among the second, non-sectarian group, however, there is often a desire for some more practical, less hide-bound

form of Christianity, typically expressed in the following comments:—

"I believe such as I've been taught. The trouble is to-day we're too selfish. Religion in my opinion needs humanizing instead of being so stereotyped, you know" (Woman, thirty, artisan class).

"Christianity practically practised, not the Go-to-Church-Sunday variety" (Man, fifty-five, middle class).

About four people out of five thus pay some sort of lip-service to religion, and only about half of these link themselves verbally with *any* branch of organized religion. It is difficult to obtain accurate data on the strength and importance of personal religious beliefs, because it is the socially done thing to say one has a religious faith, however dim and meaningless that faith may be. These figures indicate the extent of social goodwill towards religion rather than the real extent of meaningful faith. A better index to a faith with practical implications in a person's life is prayer.

Prayer

Detailed statements from Mass-Observation's panel of 1,500 voluntary informants show that just a half pray either regularly or occasionally. Half never pray. The number who have formed some habit of prayer is considerably lower than the number (nearly seven out of ten) who have formed the habit of observing some superstitious ritual, such as throwing spilt salt over the shoulder. Even 50 per cent is a high estimate for the proportion who pray with definite purpose and conviction. Accounts of private prayers show that many adults have taken over a form of words from childhood and are using it still, with little thought for its meaning or relevance, and sometimes with little real belief

* Mass-Observation is an independent organization engaged in investigating the way ordinary people think and behave. Since 1937 it has been recording the facts of public and private opinion, social habit and social change in Britain. It works through a team of full-time scientifically trained investigators, and a national panel of some 1,500 voluntary informants living in all parts of the country. Anyone can help in the latter capacity, and full explanatory details will willingly be sent to all readers of this article who write to Mass-Observation, 82 Ladbroke Road, London, W. 11.

that it has a Hearer. Detailed statements on the subject of private prayer show that many of the half who pray do so just in case there is Someone listening rather than from any firm conviction that there is. As a retired schoolmistress puts it :—

“Partly as a result of long habit, partly as an emotional need, and slightly because I think there may be some kind of telepathic influence, I ‘pray’ for those whom I love.” This, of course, is an extreme example of confused motive. But there are many more who pray with very tenuous convictions, and it is an outside estimate to say that rather under half have sufficient interest in the existence of a deity to seek in any way to communicate with Him or to ask His help in their lives.

Churchgoing

Before the war a national survey made by the Gallup Poll showed that just over a quarter of the population *said* they went to church regularly. Though this is a considerably lower figure than the proportion who say they belong to some organized religious body, it represents the proportion who feel fairly strongly that they *ought* to go to church rather than the proportion who actually do so. Actual counts undertaken by Mass-Observation at standard churches at given services suggest that the actual proportion attending church regularly is nearer one in ten. Counts also show a considerable fall-off in churchgoing since the war, and this is confirmed by reports from their home areas by observers all over the country. These show :—

| Changes in Local Churchgoing since the War | | | Percentage reporting change in their area | |
|--|-----|-----|---|------|
| | | | 1941 | 1942 |
| Increased | ... | ... | 7% | 3% |
| Decreased | ... | ... | 21% | 24% |
| No change | ... | ... | 32% | 32% |
| No information | ... | ... | 40% | 41% |

The main background facts of religious alignment can thus be summarized :—

- (a) Between four-fifths and three-quarters pay some lip-service to religion.
- (b) About a half have some definite interest in a religious faith, deep enough to cause them to pray, at least irregularly.
- (c) About two-fifths pay some lip-service to organized religion.
- (d) About a tenth are closely linked with the organized churches.

These are rough working figures, as near the truth as one can get on a subject which is delicate to approach and on which most people have definite ideas about what their

answers *ought* to be. One outstanding fact which emerges, and which is least capable of diverse interpretations, is that 20 per cent are sufficiently disinterested in religion, both personally and socially, to tell a stranger in the street that they have no religious beliefs at all. Among the younger generation more than three out of ten publicly proclaim themselves unreligious.

The Impact of War

Some clue to the nature of the present religious “revival” is given by investigations into the effects of war on people’s attitude to religion. In 1941, among the national panel of observers, 16 per cent said that war had strengthened their religious faith, 9 per cent that it had been weakened, and a negligible proportion had lost their faith since the war. A year later the proportion who felt that their faith had been strengthened had risen to 26 per cent, while the same number felt that it had been weakened. The rest were unaffected; but it must be remembered that only half ever had any deep feeling for religion, so that a considerable proportion of the religious do feel that war has affected their faith. The increase in 1942 in strengthened faith was almost entirely among women, and most often took the form of attaching more importance to non-material values in general. A middle-aged woman living in a remote village which “has the misfortune of an ancient scholar of eighty as rector,” and where “the church is usually empty and very often the services are not held,” says :—

“I never was a churchgoer, but the war has certainly strengthened my belief that the ‘things of the spirit’ are the *realities* and that the war is a passing tumult in the history of man.”

War has caused many people to think more about religion. A teacher of thirty-three :—

“It has made me think more than ever about spiritual things, and *very occasionally* I have found that this can be expressed in the form of an organized service (where the parson has been deeply spiritual and prepared to dispense with convention if necessary). Churchgoing has increasingly irritated me because it seems unreal and irrelevant.”

A young typist says, “War has increased my religious beliefs, i.e. made me think more”; and a training college instructor, “The war has caused me to think a lot more. It has not shaken my faith, but has caused me to look at its foundations more earnestly.”

Some non-religious people feel the need for some kind of non-material values in war-time, but there is little sign that they have found any. A young secretary describes her feelings :—

"I am an agnostic, but since the war began have often felt I wished I could believe in a God. The suffering that war causes is so great that one wants to be able to believe in something above it all, and particularly one wants help of a spiritual kind. But the Church's attitude towards this war has been so un-Christian, I think, that if I had any inclination towards religion, I should certainly not go back to any church."

The results of these surveys among the more thoughtful part of the population represented by the national panel suggest a considerable strengthening of faith among those who were already fairly deeply religious, especially among women. They show a desire among some non-religious people for new standards and values of a religious or less materialistic character, *but they do not suggest that many new people are turning to religion. They indicate a qualitative increase in religious faith among the previously religious, who are re-examining and revivifying their beliefs.*

These indications are amplified by the results of surveys among random samples of the general population into the effects of war on people's attitude to religion. Over a quarter say that war has changed their attitude, and rather more than half of these are less favourably disposed. Many say that they don't see how there can be a God who allows the horrors of modern war : "I don't see how there can be a God. How can there be to let such things happen?" (Waitress). Others feel that religion has failed to produce a reasonable world and have little faith in its future :—

"We've had religion for thousands of years, and look at the mess we're in. It would be better if we didn't have any" (Milkman).

"This war shows that religion is a hollow mockery. I had some hopes of it. I've none now" (Salesman).

Among those with no special religious beliefs themselves, the war-time trend is away from religion rather than towards it; but among all the samples studied never more than a tiny proportion of 1 to 4 per cent say they have lost their faith. In general the effect of war has been to confirm pre-existing attitudes, to strengthen faith where it existed before, but also to confirm and strengthen attitudes of scepticism, agnosticism and indifference. To the fore of many people's attitude to religion

is their opinion of the activities of the Churches.

II. RELIGION AND THE FUTURE

The Churches' Part

When asked what they thought of the part Christianity was playing in the war, twice as many people thought it was playing a small or insignificant part as thought it was playing a large or important one (Nov., 1942). Very few indeed expressed any ideas about the war being fought for Christian ideals, and many felt that organized religion should have nothing to do with war.

There was much criticism of the Churches and clergy, little of religion itself or of religious people. There is, among the non-religious, a widespread tolerance of religious individuals and often a feeling that a person is better for the possession of a religious faith. Those who are not themselves religious seldom criticize those who are, and private faith is looked on as a private affair. But among religious and irreligious alike there is a widespread criticism of the Churches. Criticism is accentuated in war-time by a genuine inability to understand how the teachings of Christianity can be reconciled with war-time necessity. This puzzlement, not always hostile, takes many forms, but can be typified by the following remark from a man of thirty, working class :—

"Christianity. Well, I don't know much about it. But one of the teachings of the Bible is to turn the other cheek and love your enemies; but each side is praying to the same God to smash the other side. Seems a bit inconsistent."

Bewilderment of this sort is common, especially among those with no outstanding personal interest in religion.

Post-war

Only about one person in ten actually visualizes religion taking a big part in this country after the war, but nearly three times that number would welcome it if religion were to play a bigger part in the life of the community. The contrast between hope and expectation, common to nearly all post-war ideas now, is particularly evident on the subject of religion.

Here are three statements, the first from a young hospital sister, the second from an aero-fitter of thirty-seven, the third from a woman civil servant of thirty. They show this contrast in three typical forms. Part A in each case is a description of the place they

feel religion should take in the post-war world. Part B is the place they think it actually will take :—

- A. "God knows, I don't. It should be everything."
- B. "I think that religion will continue to play a minor part in this country *unless* the Church suddenly begins to practise Christianity, but I am afraid this is a vain hope."
- A. "It should come right out and give a lead, no matter whose toes it may tread on."
- B. "About the same as it does now. It's the people's dope."
- A. "It should be the map of our lives, the guide and comforter and inspirer; the central fount of wisdom and the supporter of wise men and women; the focal point for the specialists of every science, where they can weigh their own importance against the plan of man's soul—and where they can help to make that plan and keep it real."
- B. "Actually, if Lang can carry out some of his ideas it may keep alive at least. But I fear it will dwindle and fade and disappear."

These statements typify the extent to which many people, religious and irreligious alike, have despaired of organized religion. When the Archbishop of Canterbury said in the Albert Hall in September that "the Church has not only a right, it has a duty, to declare the principles of true social life," only 14 per cent of a sample asked about it disagreed with the sentiment. Fifty-one per

cent were in full agreement, and 10 per cent in partial agreement. A quarter had no opinion either way. Cripps' statement that "We require more than ever to-day courageous Christians in our political life" was equally well received. This response represents the widespread basic goodwill towards religion, which wants and hopes for a leadership which will bring the Churches down to the everyday life of the people and make of them an active force for good. But promises without action mean little to people nowadays. Typical comments after the Albert Hall meeting included :—

"It's true enough. Trouble is, will they act on it? Words are cheap."

"There's too much speechifying—far too much. We want action and less talk."

"We get tired of promises and all that sort of thing."

There have been many promises and many hopes held out in many quarters during this war. The big question mark in people's minds, growing larger as post-war Britain becomes a possibility foreseeable in time, is the same whether the Atlantic Charter, the Beveridge Report, or the pronouncements of the Archbishop are considered. How much do these promises mean? In general, people are sceptical, and many are cynical. A rush of enthusiasm disintegrates quickly—at best into a chaos of questioning, at worst into apathy. Action—or practical, simply-understood and unambiguous tokens of forthcoming action—might quickly transform widespread passive goodwill into something dynamic, in the religious as in the political sphere. But the signs are that, in present mood, little else will.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

DIAGNOSIS OF OUR TIME

More than a year ago I devoted a Supplement to Professor Karl Mannheim's *Man and Society* (C.N.-L. 104). A new volume of essays by him has just been published under the title, *Diagnosis of Our Time*.¹ Mannheim's work is of exceptional importance for two reasons. First, he offers an analysis of present society which differs in fundamental ways from the Marxist, and, if it is accepted, is decisive for our understanding of the situation and the tasks with which it confronts us. Secondly, he is keenly aware as a sociologist of the function of religion in society, and between a third and a half of his new volume consists of a chapter, "Towards a New Social Philosophy," which bears the sub-title "A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist."

The first essay, which, like the volume, has the title "Diagnosis of Our Time," gives us the clue to the nature and importance of Mannheim's work. We cannot take effective steps to improve society unless we know what is wrong with it. No one among our contemporaries has struggled harder to gain a total view of the situation, or carried the analysis deeper, than Mannheim. He is at the same time no detached thinker, surveying the scene from the seclusion of his study. His concern with diagnosis springs from an overmastering sense that only immediate, intelligent action can save our civilization from disaster. He can never forget that "there are constellations in history in which certain possibilities have their chance, and if these are missed the opportunity may well be gone for ever." For years his energies have been directed to bringing home to others, by lectures and addresses as well as by his writings, his own conviction that this country has both the mission and the opportunity of working out, for the benefit of mankind as a whole, a new pattern of society.

THREE BASIC FACTORS

It is plain to Mannheim that what determines and controls the social situation to-day is that we are living in a mass society. This creates the problems which have led, on the one hand, to the rise of the dictatorships, and, on the other hand, confront democracy with the question of its survival. Democracy has never yet come to grips with the implications of an extension of political rights to the entire population and the problem of harmonizing the claims of an endless diversity of individuals or groups. The increase in numbers creates a problem totally different in kind from that of small societies, or of societies in which the control of affairs is in the hands of a relatively small educated and propertied class. To balance this vast multiplication of competing claims there is needed a vigorous growth of the sense of social obligation and a deepened appreciation of the general good. But, in actual fact, in modern society the bonds that unite men to one another have been weakened through the break up of the smaller groupings in which men learn in experience their responsibility for one another. In face of the vastness and complexity of the problems the ordinary man is increasingly aware of his individual helplessness. He tends to lose himself in an undifferentiated mass, to pin his hopes to a leader and to be swept away by mass emotions which, since he is no longer able to exercise a rational and responsible judgment, he has no power to resist.

The second factor that determines the character of modern society is the emergence of new social techniques. These include all the means, from aeroplanes and bombs to broadcasting and cinemas, which science and technical invention have placed in the hands of those who hold the reins of power to enable them to influence and control public

¹Kegan Paul, 10s. 6d. The volume appears in the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, which Professor Mannheim is editing. Nearly thirty volumes in the series are in active preparation. One that has already appeared, *The Fear of Freedom* (15s.), by Dr. Erich Fromm, has been widely recognized as a fresh and profound contribution to an understanding of some of the psychological implications of politics.

opinion and action. Without them the guidance and direction of a mass society would be impossible. Their influence is decisive in the sense that they limit the directions in which society can develop. It is his vivid perception of the part played by these techniques that is, perhaps, Mannheim's outstanding contribution to social and political thought. I gave a good deal of space in the earlier Supplement to the way in which they work and will not repeat what was said then.

The third factor of cardinal importance is that these techniques tend by their efficiency and by their drive towards centralization to foster minority rule. The control is exercised from key positions, and the coming into existence of these key positions in modern society makes planning inevitable. Wherever these controls exist, decisions have to be taken in regard to policy. Plans are in fact made. The only questions left to be decided are whether the planning is deliberate or haphazard, whether it is directed to right or wrong ends, whether it is undertaken by a minority for their own ends or is democratically controlled.

These three factors of the advent of a mass society, the growing power of social techniques and the inevitable change from *laissez-faire* to planning are in Mannheim's view even more fundamental than the economic structure of society. The struggle for power, the class-war are realities of which full account must be taken; but these conflicts, however acute, take place within a social framework, the character of which is unalterably fixed by the forces that have been named.

A MILITANT DEMOCRACY

The crucial question for Mannheim is whether our generation has the courage, imagination and will to master the new social techniques, to prevent them from becoming the instruments of arbitrary rule, and to employ them in the service of a free society. Democracy must become militant, constructive and progressive if it is to survive. There must be agreement about the fundamental principles on which our society will be based and the basic virtues required in its members; and all the energies of the nation must then be harnessed to the achievement of the common purpose.

DISINTEGRATION

A common purpose, however, presupposes a common faith, and the outstanding characteristic of modern society, as Mannheim

is profoundly aware, is its spiritual disintegration. For centuries Christianity has ceased to be the main integrating form in social life. No vital unifying faith has taken its place. The consequence is that in increasing numbers men have lost faith in any ultimate meaning of life.

Having no commanding religious faith to guide it, the modern world is completely at sea in regard to its values. In a disturbing chapter on "The Crisis in Valuation," Mannheim describes the process of disintegration and its causes. Society is torn by conflicting philosophies. There is no common agreement about what constitutes the good life, about what is meant by freedom and discipline, about the purposes of education, about the meaning of work and leisure. The loss of belief in God, in eternal standards and in authority of any kind, has brought about confusion and chaos in the whole field of values.

"Education, social work and propaganda, notwithstanding highly improved techniques, become less and less efficient because all the values that could guide them tend to evaporate. What is the use of developing exceedingly skilful methods of propaganda and suggestion, new techniques of learning and habit-making, of conditioning, de-conditioning and re-conditioning, if we do not know what they are for? What is the good of developing child guidance, psychiatric social work and psychotherapy if the one who is to guide is left without standards? Sooner or later everyone becomes neurotic, as it gradually becomes impossible to make a reasonable choice in the chaos of competing and unreconciled valuations."

AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN THINKERS

It is this problem of ultimate standards that is the subject of Mannheim's final chapter, which is addressed especially to Christian thinkers and is the freshest and most exciting in the book. It is clear to him that a planned society presupposes some kind of spiritual integration. A liberal and competitive society could get along without making up its mind what values are most important, that is, without a fundamental religious faith, so long as there was no threat, external or internal, that made basic agreement necessary. But the danger from rival totalitarian systems can be successfully resisted only by peoples united by a common faith and purpose in a common dedication to a different way of life. This social integration must take place at

those deeper levels of experience with which religion is concerned. In a planned society it becomes less and less possible to separate the public and private spheres and to reserve the latter for the cultivation of religion and personal relations. The framework of society determines what is possible in personal relations. One cannot practise Christianity in a society the fundamental rules and organization of which are a contradiction of its spirit.

The great question for the future is whether Christianity can become the integrating force of modern society. This depends on whether the characteristic Christian experience can be re-interpreted in terms that make it relevant to an entirely different kind of world from that in which it was first formulated. In small groups and in relatively simple situations this re-interpretation can be carried out directly and, to a large extent, unconsciously. But in a civilization so complex as ours the task demands a wide range of technical knowledge. That means that it can be carried out only by co-operation between religious thinkers and experts in the various social sciences. There is no other way, for the simple reason that the abstract formulation of standards gets us nowhere. Their real meaning can be discovered only in the contexts in which they have to be applied. A rule may seem in the abstract to be entirely Christian, but in actual practice it may produce very un-Christian results.

Is it, then, possible to bring about this integration between religious faith and sociological knowledge on which the salvation of society depends? Can there be effective, practical co-operation between religious thinkers, sociologists and men of affairs in finding the right answers to its problems? Unless this can be done, religion must remain sterile, because it is unrelated to actual life. The question is whether two different approaches to reality, the religious and the sociological, can find a common meeting-ground.

Approaching the question as a sociologist, Mannheim lays down the conditions which have to be met on his side. From the point of view of the sociologist values emerge within the historical process. They arise partly from the preferences and choices of the individual, and partly from the demands which society makes on him in order that his behaviour may fit into the pattern of an existing order. They are of the nature of traffic lights set up by society to regulate individual conduct. When the structure of society changes, the indi-

dual will be confronted with new stimuli and new demands and will respond in new ways. Fresh adjustments will be called for and valuations will change. This is the process which the sociologist studies, and in his investigations he must be allowed a free hand. He is not prepared to have bars set to his enquiry by being told that some things are profane and may be investigated, while others are holy and not open to examination. He must be allowed to push his enquiries to the farthest limit to which he can carry them. It is precisely when this has been done that he will discover for himself the limitations of his method and realize that other approaches to reality are necessary if its full meaning is to be grasped.

I see, as a Christian, no reason why this demand of the social scientist should not be freely conceded. We have frequently insisted in the Christian News-Letter (e.g. C.N.-L. Nos. 120 and 163) that science must have unrestricted scope to investigate everything that its methods can prove, and that Christians must cast all fear of it to the winds and welcome it as an indispensable ally in the service of mankind.

COMMANDING EXPERIENCES

There comes a point, however, at which the religious issue forces itself on the attention of the sociologist. Confronted with the facts of spiritual disintegration, he is driven to recognize that it is to religious forces that we must look to bring about a new integration.

It is not the business of the sociologist to pronounce on the *truth* of religious beliefs; so long as he sticks to his proper trade he is concerned only with the question how religion works and how it influences the social process. It is awareness of this limitation that impels Mannheim to address his challenge to Christian thinkers. And it is precisely the questions that from his standpoint as sociologist he raises about religion that illuminate in a fresh way for Christians the significance of their faith and the tasks to which they are called.

We have seen that valuations arise within the social process. For the purposes of psychology and sociology, Mannheim reminds us, "the real meaning of any human activity can only be found when it is defined in terms of adjustment. Adjustment means that in some way an organism relates its inner and overt behaviour to the requirements of its surroundings." But the important point to grasp is that there is not only *one* efficient adjustment in a given situation, but several.

This is true even at the biological level ; on hearing a noise the hare may run away and the frog stay put and hide. There has to be a selection between different forms of adjustment. Among the many possible efficient adjustments some may be Christian and others not Christian. What is it that determines the choice ? Obviously, Mannheim asserts, it is some basic experience which is felt to reveal the meaning of life as a whole.

It is just these original, commanding, decisive experiences that it is the function of religion to provide, and that Christianity does provide in rich and abundant measure. Mannheim's term for them is paradigmatic experiences.¹ They are evoked not by intellectual propositions or abstract rules of conduct, but by primordial images and concrete examples, which point in the direction in which truth and right are to be sought. There is a deep significance in the fact that the teaching of Christ was given largely in the form of parables. The nature of a parable is that it does not lay down abstract principles, but speaks through a concrete image. A concrete image conveys to us at one stroke the outward action and the inner motives, the living actors and the social context in which they acted. It communicates to us the whole wealth of religious experience, which is always more than the merely rational aspects of life.

As illustrations of primordial images Mannheim mentions the conception of the hero, the sage, the virgin, the saint and the penitent ; and, in specifically Christian experience, baptism, absolution, *agape*, the eucharist, the Good Shepherd, the Cross and redemption.

It must be made plain that it is no part of Mannheim's intention to advocate a purely subjective view of religion, as though religion consisted only in states of mind. He is not concerned to deny any of the realities underlying these images ; the question of the *truth* of religion lies outside his beat as sociologist. The great service he has done us is to re-enforce from a fresh angle the fact, which we constantly tend to forget, that it is through these primordial images rather than through intellectual formulations, however necessary these are in their place, that religious reality reaches to the deepest springs of our being and moves us to decisive action.

It is the weakening of the power of these primordial images that has led to the

despiritualization of modern life. Their disappearance without anything else to take their place is the cause of "the disintegration of modern life-experience and conduct. Without paradigmatic experiences no consistent conduct, no character formation and no real human co-existence and co-operation are possible. Without them our universe of discourse loses its articulation, conduct falls to pieces and only disconnected bits of successful behaviour patterns and fragments of adjustment to an ever-changing environment, remain." Life is left without any direction.

An important new line of country has been opened up by Mannheim for Christian thought to explore. I hope to follow it up before long in another Supplement. To what extent it is possible by conscious effort to restore the power of images which have lost their hold over men's minds is one of the large questions to be examined. But the more Christian thought occupies itself with the problems raised in this book the closer it will come to the growing points of life.

Mannheim has shown how large a field there is for active and fruitful co-operation between religious thinkers, social scientists and men of affairs. He has claimed for scientists the right to push their analysis of society as far as it can be carried, but he insists with equal force that there are basic, decisive experiences which *precede* analysis. Their effect is to enlarge and deepen "awareness." An increase of such awareness is in Mannheim's view our deepest need to-day.

The editor of *The Nineteenth Century* is constantly drumming into us that political and social thinking in this country is at present at a very low ebb. The most vigorous and creative thought, he tells us, is to be found to-day among the French, while even under the Nazis there is more dynamic and constructive thinking going on in Germany than in Great Britain. This book of Mannheim's is one which can hold its own with any contribution in the same field. Its grasp of the social process as a whole is so far in advance of the ordinary ways of thinking of most of us that we may need to read it three or four times before its full significance becomes apparent. But those who are willing to take the trouble will find their labour rewarded, and will agree that Mannheim is dealing with real problems which profoundly affect the lives of all of us.

J. H. O.

¹ Paradigm : pattern, exemplar, example (Oxford English Dictionary).

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE

By The Rev. WILLIAM PATON, D.D.

The somewhat ponderous title of this paper is intended to mark off a definite part of the larger subject of Christian responsibility for the rebuilding of world order. The paper will not deal with the question of what from a Christian point of view is a desirable international order, nor the practical question of the share to be taken by Christian organizations in the immediate pre- and post-armistice work of reconstruction, commonly referred to as "relief," which was the subject of a recent News-Letter (C.N.-L. No. 169). The latter task and the subject of this paper, which is the reconstruction of Christian institutions in Europe, are closely related but they are distinguishable.

It was pointed out in the earlier News-Letter that in the World Council of Churches there exists a fellowship uniting British Christians with the Christians of the European continent. This does much more than provide the organizational means of sending help; it makes it possible to find from the people of the European countries what they themselves feel that they need. Most of the material assistance needed by the stricken continent of Europe will have to come from the United States of America and the British Commonwealth of Nations, and this is also to some extent true in regard to the reconstruction of Christian institutions. It is of the utmost importance that British and Americans should not begin by saying: "What are we going to do?" but should ask first, "What do they need?" Fortunately, even in war-time, the organization of the World Council of Churches (launched only a year before the outbreak of war in Europe and now comprising nearly eighty Churches) has been effective enough for contact to be maintained between some, if not all, of the European Churches and those of America, Britain and the rest of the world. An important memorandum has been prepared by the Geneva staff of the Council, and was

approved at a meeting of members of the Provisional Committee of the Council held at Geneva, in which representatives from France, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden and Germany took part. It was later endorsed by members of the Provisional Committee in North America and Great Britain. In this document we have at least an outline of what representative Christian leaders on the Continent are thinking about the future and the needs of the European Churches in that future. The statement which follows adheres closely to the text of the memorandum, because we need to see the case as our continental friends see it.

THE NEED

The extent of the need will only become fully manifest at the end of the war, though it is already clear that the task of reconstruction will be immense and will demand the concerted action of all Churches and Christian organizations. The main tasks are given as follows:—

(1) The restoration of ruined churches and other buildings such as parish houses, Christian schools and hospitals. The number of cities where all or many church buildings have been ruined is constantly growing.

(2) The supply of funds to Churches which have been disorganized or had their funds confiscated. It is unlikely that repayment will be obtainable from the new post-war governments.

(3) Christian organizations and movements, including the Youth movements, which have been proscribed, or lost all their resources, will need to be completely re-constituted.

(4) Provision of pastors and lay-workers for Churches and Christian movements. In some countries the number of pastors is rapidly decreasing, and recruiting and training for the ministry have almost ceased.

Temporary help will be needed in personnel, scholarships, subsidies to theological seminaries and in other ways.

(5) Assistance for Christian relief organizations, such as Home Mission bodies and institutions for the poor, sick, orphans and refugees, to continue and extend their work.

(6) The production of Christian literature, which in some countries has almost wholly ceased. There is a great demand for Bibles, simple commentaries, evangelistic literature and theological works.

(7) The re-establishment of the foreign missionary boards which have in some instances been destroyed. This is additional to the maintenance of their work abroad, which has been provided for through the International Missionary Council and may continue to need assistance for some time after the close of hostilities.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The memorandum goes on to state certain changes in the church life of Europe which need to be understood by members of other Churches whose experience has been different. The Churches on the Continent have been far more profoundly affected by this war than by previous wars, because of its "totalitarian" character. Some of them have been so completely disrupted that years must pass before they can be fully reorganized. The channels and instruments through which help would normally be given simply do not exist, and the total rebuilding of the church organization will be necessary.

The suffering, particularly the spiritual suffering, through which the European Churches have passed has brought about deep transformations in faith and attitude, which create a gulf between those who have gone through that experience and those who have not. Even members of these who have been forced to emigrate can only partly understand what is going on in the hearts and minds of their countrymen. An immense effort of spiritual imagination is needed on the part of those who would help the Christians of these countries.

The Churches in some countries have through these years of conflict developed a much stronger sense of their responsibility to the nation as a whole, and have come to hold a more central place in the national life. Their tasks and opportunities in spiritual, social and political reconstruction will be more considerable than after the last war.

They must be helped to perform these more fully national tasks.

There will be new tasks in relation to the masses of the workers. In some countries the wall of separation between the Church and the working class is being broken down, and new opportunities for large-scale evangelization and for Christian social work appear. The needs of youth have also to be met, especially in countries where youth has been demoralized and uprooted. In all countries the Government will take a larger share in the direction of youth work than in the past, but since the basic problem is spiritual the Churches will have to play a large part.

The deep hatred which has grown in the hearts of the oppressed nations will make collaboration between Christians of certain countries, and even in some cases of the same country, difficult. Willingness to give or to send workers to certain countries will be influenced by these factors.

Among Christian leaders there is a genuine sense of solidarity with other Christians through the ecumenical movement, but this is confined to the few who have actually taken part in that movement. It will be necessary to take every means to extend the range, and deepen the quality, of work in the ecumenical movement, so that by conference, travel, training and literature the reality of the Church universal may be brought home more widely to the individual members of the Churches.

THE SPIRIT NEEDED

The memorandum goes on to describe the spirit needed for the performance of these tasks. It must be the spirit of Christian fellowship (*koinonia*)—unselfish and unconditional sharing between those who acknowledge each other as members of one and the same Body. All Churches which can help will have to come to the aid of all Churches which need help. This does not exclude special relations being established between Churches of the same confession; Lutherans in the United States, for example, have greatly aided the missions of the European Lutheran Churches, and American and British Baptists will no doubt wish to give special aid to other Baptists. But there can be no place for competition between Churches or for relief as a means for proselytism among Christians of another denomination. It needs to be made clear, for example, that Protestant Churches undertaking relief in Eastern Orthodox coun-

tries will not use their presence for purposes of proselytism. Œcumenical service implies that Churches providing relief will work through and with the existing Churches in each country.

It will plainly be easiest to achieve this outlook if the work is co-ordinated in some international or œcumenical Christian body. This will minimize the danger of action by foreign Churches being regarded as prompted by nationalist or imperialist aims. The need for close co-operation with Governments in tasks of reconstruction is obvious, and it is for that reason all the more important that the work of reconstituting the Christian institutions should be clearly seen to be an effort of the Church as a whole increasingly conscious of its œcumenical nature. This ought to be reflected in organization.

The memorandum then deals with the type of workers needed by the countries requiring aid. There has been in some countries so serious a depletion in the numbers of pastors and of lay-workers that there will be needed an international sharing of resources in men, such as has taken place in relation to Asia and Africa through the missionary movement, but never on a large scale in relation to Europe. Sweden and Switzerland, where the number of workers trained for the work of the Church is larger than can be used, and other European countries also in some measure, will be able to supply a proportion of the personnel, but it is agreed that workers will be needed from overseas.

It is suggested that in choosing such workers two points be borne in mind. The first is definiteness of Christian conviction. The European Churches having gone through a time of trial such as they have not known since the Reformation, are turning back to the foundations of their faith in the Bible, and those who would help them must take their stand with them on the foundation which has made it possible for these Churches to remain firm against the onslaught made on them. The other desideratum is spiritual imagination and sympathy, which will be specially needed where workers of one confession work among those of another, more particularly where the difference is wide, as between Protestant and Orthodox.

It is further suggested that in the choice of personnel for each country and Church there should be co-operation between representatives of the sending and receiving Church, so that maladjustments and disappointments may be avoided. Preparation can begin now.

Courses in languages and modern history are essential; but, hardly less so, studies which will help the candidates for work overseas to get a living picture of the faith, life and work of the Churches they desire to assist.

Little is said about the cost, since it is not yet possible to estimate the need with any accuracy. At the moment some of the continental Churches are in a relatively favourable financial position, because many of the channels in which money was used are closed—missionary work abroad, production of literature, buildings, even fewer pastors' stipends. This situation is, however, temporary. There can be no doubt that it will be necessary to mobilize the resources of the Churches on a very wide scale to meet the needs which have already arisen, and will arise before the war ends.

ORGANIZATION

It may be assumed that the Churches, having brought into existence a World Council, will look to it to be the main instrument of action. It is proposed to set up a Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches with a committee fully representative both of the Churches that will give help and those that will receive it. Invaluable work has been done since 1922 by the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid, under the distinguished guidance of Dr. Adolf Keller. Now that a fully representative Council of Churches exists it may be expected that the work of the Bureau will be closely united with the Council, and the tradition and experience of the Bureau will be of the greatest service to the Council in facing the vast tasks ahead. The Reconstruction Department would undertake a detailed survey of needs, keep a register of all projects for aid, present the needs to the Churches able to help, formulate projects of aid where the help of several Churches is needed, and take executive action where it is desired and asked for by the Churches concerned.

Such in broad outline, and in the main as seen through the eyes of continental churchmen themselves, is the nature of the need and task. That the share to be taken by the Churches of the British Isles will be considerable cannot be doubted, and future issues of the Christian News-Letter may, it is to be hoped, return to this vital theme. For the moment, it may be enough to state what steps have been taken already, and to relate this "long-term" problem to that of more immediate relief and reconstruction.

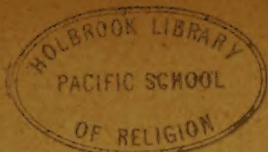
In January of this year a conference was held at which there were present representatives of all the varied types of activity carried out in European countries by the Christian Churches and organizations of Britain—chaplaincies, aid to sister Churches of the same denomination, youth organizations, Bible and Christian literature work, missionary work among Jews, work among students and much else. The meeting was enriched by the presence of several representatives of the continental Churches. A strong, representative body is being formed, related both to the British Council of Churches and to the World Council, which will act for the British Churches and organizations and keep in close touch both with the continental group through the office at Geneva and with North America.

The link between what has been called "long-term" and "short-term" policies needs to be kept in mind. The Churches are concerned most vitally with the long-term

problem, but they are intimately linked also with the short-term one, as the earlier Christian News-Letter showed, and have a share in the collaboration between the voluntary societies and the Government. The Churches on the Continent are in a position to help in the immediate tasks of relief and reconstruction by the formation of local committees, finding personnel and in other ways. And it is the spirit of the long-term planning, with its regard for the building up of what will endure and its solicitude for the living Christian community, that must dominate the short-term and immediate work. Work done in the wrong spirit with hasty efficiency might impede seriously the fuller co-operation of the Churches in meeting the long-term needs. The whole venture needs to be viewed as one of co-operation in a common enterprise between Churches, some of which have passed through great suffering, and others which have suffered less and are now privileged to make sacrifices to help their brethren.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.



CHRISTIANS AND THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

The subject of this Supplement is not the Beveridge Report in itself, but the Christian attitude to the proposals made in the Report.

The Beveridge Report is a plan to abolish want. The objective must have, as it has had, the instant sympathy of Christians; to alleviate want is a demand of natural justice, which receives peculiar emphasis in the New Testament. Christ chose to spend a large part of His brief ministry in relieving men's physical needs. His teaching is no less plain than His example. He declared the love of God and of our neighbour to be the way to eternal life, and showed in the parable of the Good Samaritan that the test is not religious profession, but the performance of acts of mercy.

But the Beveridge Report is not simply the re-affirmation of the duty of the good neighbour. It is an attempt to translate that duty into terms that are applicable to a large-scale society. When Christ commanded us to love our neighbour, the context in which the duty had to be fulfilled was the life of a small primary group. The difference made by the change of scale is enormous. In such a society as ours Christian good-will without a Beveridge Report is limited in scope and impotent to relieve universal distress. The Report turns what, over wide areas, could only be a pious aspiration into a live political issue.

THE RECEPTION OF THE REPORT

The interest aroused by the Report throughout the world has been amazing. It has taken its place by the side of the great happenings of the war. As regards this country, Archbishop Lord Lang of Lambeth said in the House of Lords that he could remember no occasion on which the convictions and feelings of the masses of our people were more united. The extraordinary response is no doubt due to the bearing of the Report on the question latent in the minds of common men everywhere, whether the United Nations have a plan for a better order for the future than the Nazis. Popular instinct has fastened on the Beveridge Report as a test case. On the initiative of the British Government, pro-

posals, backed by great expert knowledge, have been put forward for removing once for all the spectre of want from British homes. Is it really intended to carry them into effect?

It is generally agreed that the Government were not happy in the exposition of their policy in the debate in Parliament. The policy which they announced represents in fact a far-reaching social advance. They are committed to setting up a comprehensive medical service and instituting a system of children's allowances. They have also adopted many of the proposals for the abolition of want, though they have not accepted the principle of doing this by providing in all cases a minimum income sufficient for subsistence without further resources. But the way in which the matter was presented conveyed to very many people, both at home and abroad, the impression that they were not prepared to implement a Report to which they had themselves given unprecedented publicity. This was unfortunate, since disillusionment and cynicism are widespread, and many are only too ready to suspect that the phrases in the Atlantic Charter about all men living out their lives in freedom from want are empty words which will lead to nothing.

ARE WE RESOLVED TO ABOLISH WANT?

There are three questions to which an answer is needed in order to arrive at a Christian decision regarding the Beveridge proposals. The first is whether we are really determined to abolish want, and are willing to pay the necessary price.

The issue was well put by Sir George Schuster in a letter to *The Times*. He urged the Government to make plain that they stand for a distribution of the total national income which will give priority to certain defined national purposes over any claim by individuals to enjoy personal wealth in excess of their reasonable requirements. If we can be sure that insurance against want is "to take priority over any private luxury or

vested interest, then the fact that much must remain provisional can readily be accepted."

Formulated in this way, the question is plainly one of moral choice. What values do we put first? During the war the nation has accepted without question the principle that the equal distribution to all of the necessities of life should have the first claim on available supplies. What reason is there why the same principle should not be made a permanent feature of our national life? As Mr. James Griffiths said in the House of Commons, the whole of our manhood and womanhood has been asked to fight and work for the country. We have asked for unlimited sacrifice and have a corresponding responsibility. It is a debt of honour that those for whom jobs cannot be found should be guaranteed an income that will save them and their families from want.

The question is one in which, as in all questions where personal interests are involved, self-deception is easy. There are many difficulties connected with the Report, but the first question we have to settle is the attitude we take to them. We may face them with the determination to find a way through, or we may make them, consciously or unconsciously, an excuse for leaving things as they are and evading our responsibility. By this difference of attitude we are morally judged.

THE TECHNICAL MEANS

The second question to be answered is whether the means proposed to abolish want are well chosen and considered. If not, they will break down in practice and the end will not be achieved. The Report includes a large number of specific proposals. It bristles with details.

Mr. H. U. Willink, in a speech which was a notable parliamentary success, showed the difficulties that arise, even from the point of view of the warmest sympathisers with the Report, when one tries to give effect to the first of the six fundamental principles, i.e. a flat rate of subsistence benefit. There are baffling questions in connection with industrial pensions under workmen's compensation, the present wide differences in rents and the inequalities of old age pensions during the interim period of twenty years.

As is pointed out in a very thorough and by no means unsympathetic article in the *Round Table*, the plan is not simply a plan to abolish want, but one to abolish it by a particular method, i.e. by bringing everyone into the scheme, whether he is in want or not, and by

giving relief as a matter of right without any means test. As the article acknowledges, there is much to be said for this. In the view of the British Council of Churches, the plan by requiring from the individual a contribution to his own security and at the same time demanding from the more privileged a larger contribution, gives expression to a new sense of community, and for this reason should be supported by those who believe that we are "members one of another." It may justly be claimed, however, that these proposals should be examined on their merits and not on the mistaken assumption that they are essential to the abolition of want.

The finance of the scheme is too large, many-sided and technical a question for discussion here. Many competent authorities, besides Sir William Beveridge, agree that the scheme can be afforded and is workable if all are determined to make it work and if we are willing to pay the price. Important as the financial questions are, the discussion of them must not be allowed to distract attention from the crucial question of the just distribution of such resources as there are. In war-time the principle has ruled that, *because* there is scarcity, necessities must be made equally available to all.

The technical questions involved enter inseparably into a judgment for or against the Beveridge plan. They are questions to be decided not on Christian but on scientific grounds. The individual Christian citizen has as a rule neither the knowledge nor the leisure to form an independent judgment of them and has to rely on the advice of those in whose competence and disinterestedness he has most confidence. While he cannot answer them himself, it ought to be his concern that they should receive a disinterested answer in the light of the best expert knowledge. No reasonable person will quarrel with the Home Secretary's demand that the Government should not be asked to sign on the dotted line.

THE BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

The third question that has to be answered in regard to a plan of this magnitude relates to its pre-suppositions and its wider effects on social life as a whole. Even if it achieved its aim of abolishing want, its indirect effects in other directions might conceivably make the total result harmful rather than good. It is about this third question that in Christian quarters most anxiety has been felt.

We need not spend time over the fear that the plan will have an injurious effect on the national character by undermining the sturdy self-reliance of the individual and removing the incentive to thrift. As Viscount Samuel said in the Lords debate, nothing undermines self-respect and self-reliance more than undeserved destitution and insecurity of livelihood.

A more serious question is that of the social philosophy implied in the Report. This issue has been raised in the pages of the *Tablet* and in a letter from Dr. H. A. Mess to the Bishop of Sheffield printed in the *Bishop's Letter*.

The Report is concerned with the provision of economic security. But this is only one of three fundamental needs of man in society. The other two are status and social function. As the Council of Churches has pointed out (and as Sir William Beveridge has himself constantly emphasized), economic security is to be desired only "as the means or basis of a fuller and more responsible life. Men need not only to be free from want, but also to be occupied in useful and significant work, if their moral nature is to be satisfied." With these vitally important matters of status and social function the Report does not deal. That is no criticism; they did not come within its terms of reference. But it is a relevant and important question whether its proposals may not make the other purposes more difficult to achieve, and whether the plan will not work out in ways that will limit seriously the individual's freedom of choice and exercise of responsibility.

It is fairly clear that we can have the Beveridge plan on the condition that everyone will give up whatever income or freedom of choice he is called to give up by a paternal and, it may be hoped, just Government. Up to a point that is necessary and right; we cannot in a large-scale society act as neighbours to one another in any other way. But the question is how far we are to move in that direction. Some people want the Beveridge plan just because they see in it the possibility of rapid and indefinite growth of official control over all incomes, wages and persons.

When Sir William Beveridge tells us that his Report is based on the principle of bread for all before cake for anybody, he qualifies his insistence on bread for all by the words "on condition of service." The plan provides, as an inevitable corollary of a scheme of national insurance, that unemployment benefit shall after a limited period be conditional on attendance at a work or training

centre. If work cannot be provided at the present place of residence, refusal to accept it elsewhere may be made a disqualification for benefit. These proposals have received little prominence in the discussions; they contain very far-reaching possibilities. Everything depends on the administrative interpretation and on the spirit in which the policy is carried out. A programme of re-training and helping men to find work might be administered as an educational agency of the highest value. But it is plain that powers would pass into the hands of the central government which could be used for wrong ends and in wrong ways, and might in the end clamp down on us the totalitarian State in its most obnoxious form. The State cannot afford to underwrite the misfortunes of industry without having a say both in the conduct of industry and in the ordering of the lives of those who are the recipients of its benefits. The trend towards a paternal, bureaucratic and despotic State is in many ways the most powerful and most dangerous tendency of our time, and we have to be constantly on our guard against its dangers.

THE CHRISTIAN DECISION

In the light of this discussion there appear to be three attitudes to the Report between which we have to choose.

First, we can oppose the plan. This is a possible Christian decision, if we honestly believe either that it is unworkable, and therefore will not achieve its end, or that the total result will be to do more harm than good. But it is a serious responsibility for Christians to take on themselves to reject a plan which attempts to make a decent job of what we have in the past been attempting to do chaotically and insufficiently, and by this rejection to perpetuate much unnecessary suffering and pitiful waste of human abilities and strength.

It is academic to debate the question whether a society in which everyone could find a job and earn good wages would be better than one in which a comprehensive State-controlled scheme of social insurance is necessary. This is merely an evasion of the question to be decided here and now, which is whether our society, being what it is, and many of its less privileged members being as a result of past neglect what they are, the provision of economic security may not be the immediate need as a form of first aid. This may be the indispensable means of renewing hope, restoring self-respect and

creating the sense of belonging to a community.

The second possible attitude is a blind and uncritical support of the Beveridge plan because it appears to be directed to a Christian end. There have been endorsements of the Report in Christian quarters which have been quite indiscriminating. They appear to welcome it as in itself a long step towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and contain no hint that it might equally well, for all its good intentions, carry us in the opposite direction. To support a good end without regard to the way in which it is reached is not to exercise a responsible Christian judgment.

The third attitude is that of active and discriminating support. Let us define this attitude more precisely.

We shall first of all make up our minds that corroding and corrupting insecurity must go, and freedom from want and fear become a reality for all. This will be a number one priority, in the sense that we shall subject to rigorous scrutiny anything that claims to come before it. We shall also be on our guard against allowing disagreements about details to hinder co-operation in attaining the main objective.

We shall at the same time recognize that any plan for achieving this must include a variety of proposals, each of which calls for separate consideration. This necessary examination of particular features must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the plan. It is one of the merits of the Beveridge Report that its various parts have been integrated into a whole by a single mind. Amendments which in themselves have much in their favour might make the scheme as a whole less workable and efficient. In particular it will be important to distinguish as the discussion proceeds between changes that are the result of disinterested criticism designed to improve the scheme and those demanded by selfish

interests. How far, for example, is the rejection by the Government of the proposal to convert industrial assurance from a competitive business to a public service a surrender to a highly organized sectional interest?

In the steps which we take to create economic security we shall keep our eyes open to the limitations and dangers that may attend them, and set ourselves to overcome these. We shall pursue economic security not as an end in itself, but as a foundation on which to build a society that will secure to all its members social status and social function, freedom and the exercise of responsibility. We shall look on economic security as something to be taken in our stride and got out of the way, in order that we may be free to give our whole attention to the larger and more difficult questions which our society must solve or perish; as a first-class investment which, by increasing the efficiency of the population, will fit the nation to undertake great tasks that might otherwise be beyond its power.

The question may hinge in the last resort on the greatness or littleness of our faith. There are always limits to our possibilities of action imposed by external conditions. But facts are also always in some measure what men choose to make them. When we imagine ourselves to be making rational decisions about proposals for the abolition of want, what may be really being decided is how much faith we have in the future destiny and mission of this country.

Perhaps it is in this region that the most important connection between Christianity and the Beveridge Report is to be sought. Can Christian faith in the purpose of God for human life give to men the understanding, courage and hope which will enable them to tame and master the Leviathan of modern industrial civilization and create out of it a true social order?

J. H. O.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.